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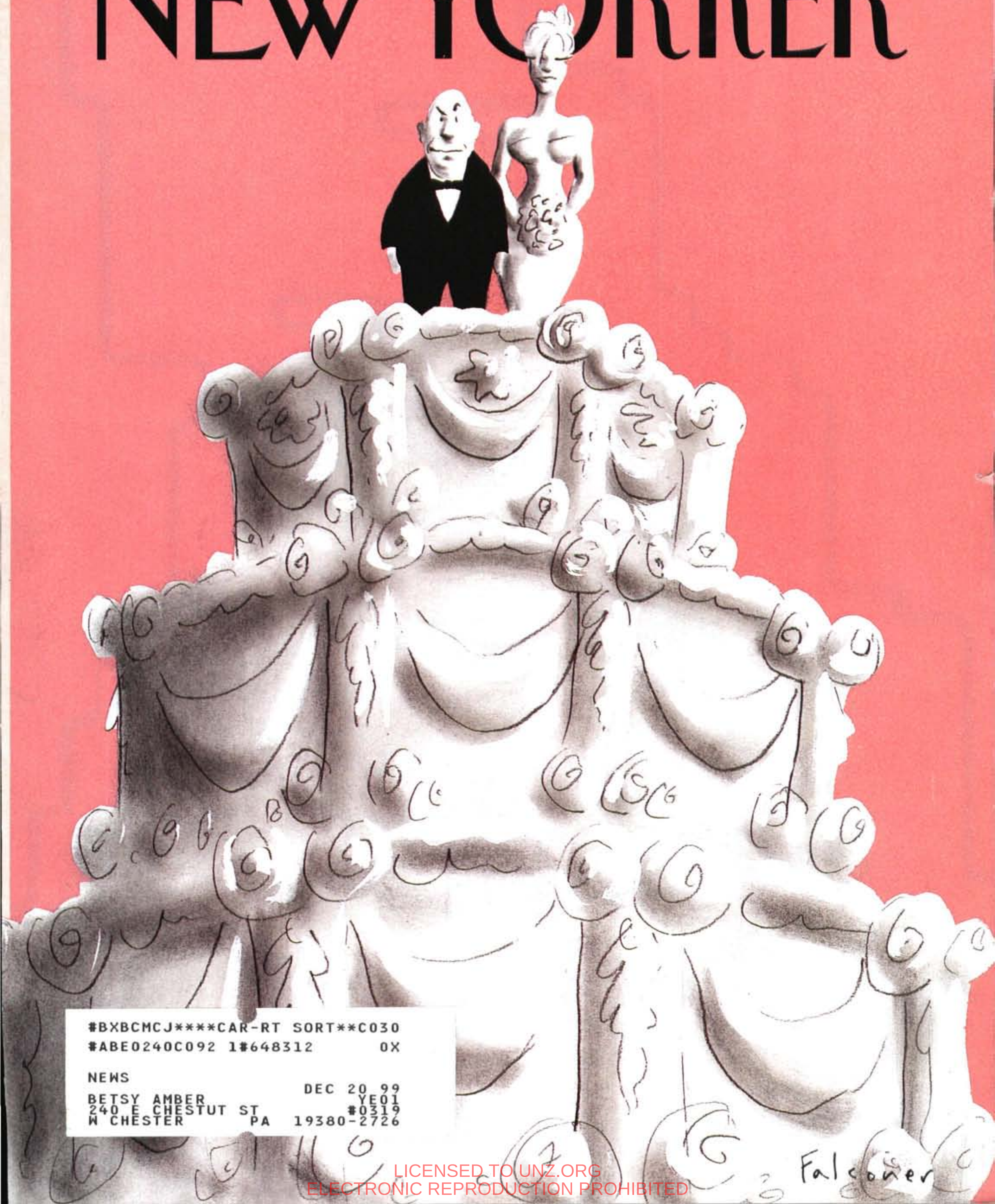
June 7, 1999



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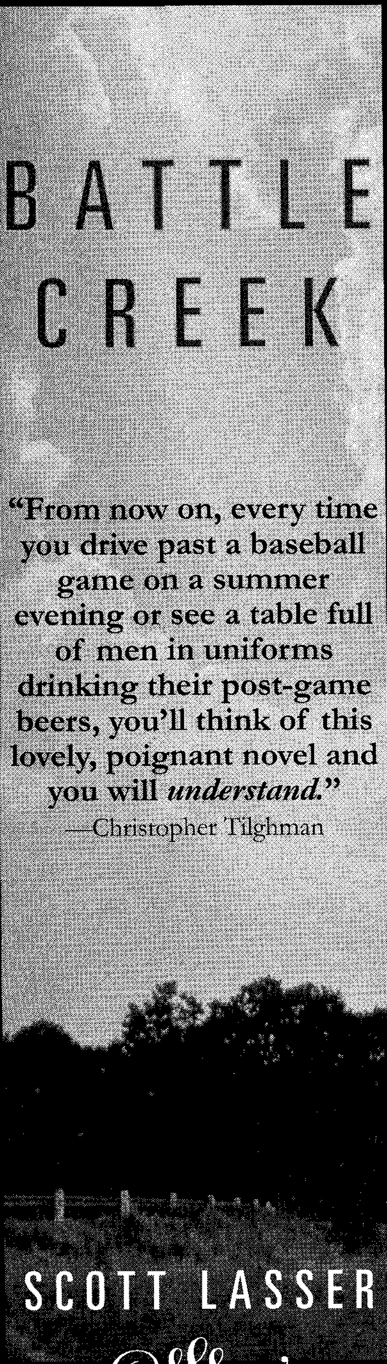
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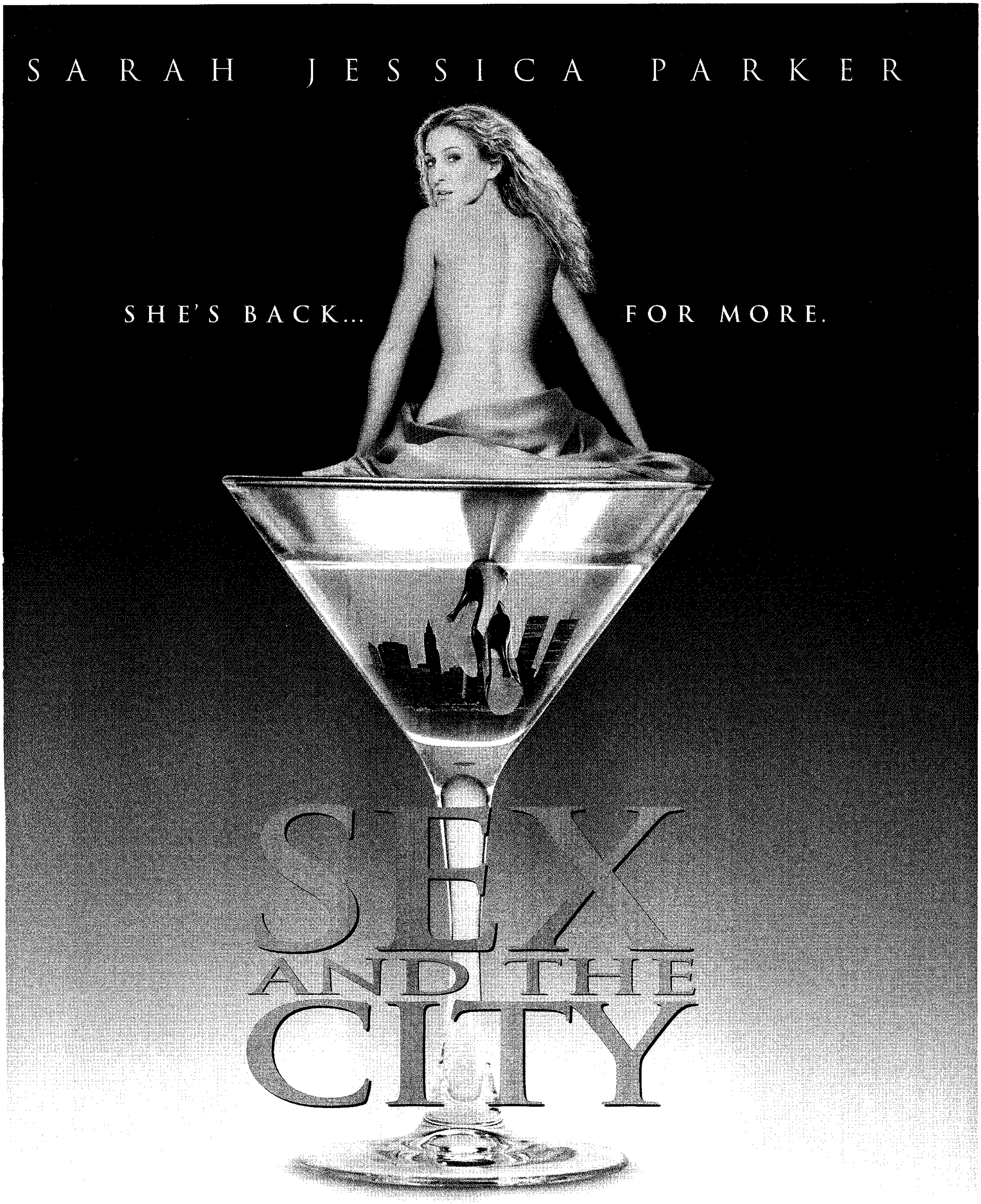
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EMILY NUNN (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 51) covers theatre and restaurants for Goings on About Town. ♦

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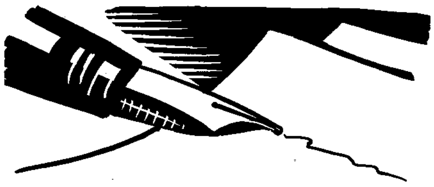

THE PRICE OF WAR

Michael Ignatieff, in "Balkan Physics" (May 10th), writes, citing Henry Kissinger, that "now that the bombing has begun, NATO cannot be allowed to fail," for, "if it does, the entire strategic architecture that has linked American and European interests since the Second World War will be in ruins." Preventing failure has become the only purpose of the war: NATO is fighting for its institutional life. If its failure will rid us of an organization that must wage war to survive, then so be it, and good riddance.

LEONARD V. JOHNSON
Westport, Ontario, Canada

Like Michael Ignatieff and the American Ambassador to Macedonia Christopher Hill, I spent some years of my childhood living in Belgrade in the nineteen-fifties. I was the son of the Albanian Ambassador, but my years in Belgrade did not make me anti-Serb. American and Western European leaders have always had difficulty realizing that the Balkan peoples—all of them—live in the past and can't cleanse themselves of past feuds and animosities. It is a mistake to cherish the American dream of multiethnic states for the Balkans. I wish that NATO had got rid of Milosevic early on in his regime, so that the Serbs might at least have had a chance to join the other newly established democracies of Eastern Europe. Now, unfortunately, the Serbs will have to pay a high price for their dictator—higher than the Albanians paid for theirs.

SHKELQIM BEQARI
Boston, Mass.

THE PRACTICAL DYLAN

In "The Wanderer" (May 10th) Alex Ross writes about Bob Dylan's lyrics and his music, which provide fascinating cerebral recreation. But Ross overlooks the more practical influence that Dylan had on popular culture. For instance, the popularity of "Like a Rolling Stone," which was seven minutes long, forced radio stations all over the country to change the then universal three-minute song format, shattering a constricting paradigm and setting the stage for the development of FM radio and free-form rock and roll.

ROBERT BRENNAN
Fairfax, Calif.

PET THEORIES

Jerome Groopman goes on about the wonders of the trembling dogs used in studies of narcolepsy, blindness, and shyness ("Pet Scan," May 10th). And all so we humans can stay awake, see better, and not redden our faces with a blush. Our ancient reverence for animal sacrifice lives on in the contemporary fabric of public support for researchers working at the expense of frightened and bamboozled dogs.

DAVID RASEY
Casa Grande, Ariz.

Animal research is relevant to human—and to animal—health and well-being. One difficulty researchers face that Jerome Groopman didn't mention is that supporting specialized colonies of research animals has not been very high up on the priority list of federal sponsors of research. In addition, such research is usually dependent on favorable reviews by institutional animal-care-and-use committees that must rule on whether the goals of each project outweigh the ethical problems of breeding and using dogs that might suffer. These are among the reasons that the use of dogs in research has declined by about twenty-five per cent in the last five years. We should all be grateful that the researchers Groopman wrote about have beaten the odds.

DENNIS O. JOHNSEN, D.V.M.
Clinical Professor, School of Medicine
University of Washington
Seattle, Wash.

•

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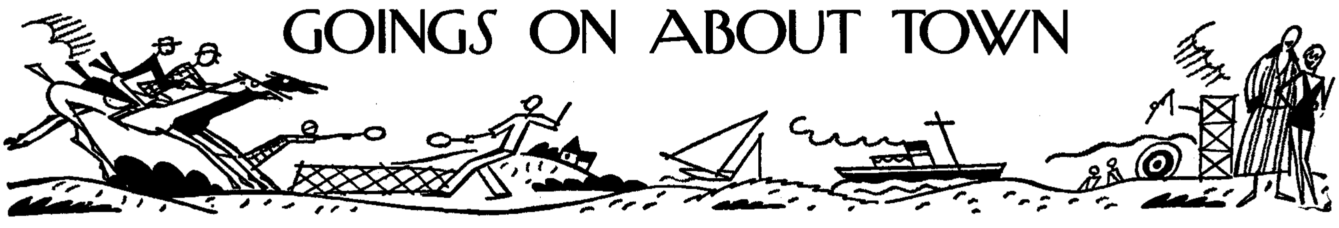

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—The final series in this year's six-week marathon of one-acts begins June 2 at 7:30, with plays by Edward Allan Baker, Bill Bozzone, Christine Farrell, and Jamie Richards and Kevin Harris. The marathon continues through June 13. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-4982.)

The Gathering—Theodore Bikel stars in a new play by Arje Shaw, about three generations of a family living in New York during the Reagan years. In previews. (Playhouse 91, 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Gemini—A Second Stage revival of Albert Innaurato's 1976 comedy. In previews. (307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

Gertrude & Alice: A Likeness to Loving—Lola Pashalinski and Linda Chapman portray Stein and Toklas, in a play they co-wrote. In previews. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

Hurrah at Last—In Richard Greenberg's most recent play, a writer (Peter Frechette) is tortured by his family and his finances. A Roundabout staging. Two previews on June 2. Opens June 3 at 7. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 719-1300.)

If Love Were All—Twiggy and Harry Groener portray Gertrude Lawrence and Noël Coward, in a musical comedy adapted from Coward's works. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

The Image Makers—Ingmar Bergman's staging of a new play by Per Olov Enquist, a fictional account of the first screening of Victor Sjöström's silent film "The Phantom Carriage." Four performances only: June 2 and June 4-5 at 7:30 and June 6 at 3. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

La Terrasse—In a comedy by the French screenwriter and dramatist Jean-Claude Carrière, a couple in the midst of a breakup must contend with apartment-hungry Parisians anxious to rent their place. In previews through June 6. Opens June 8 at 7:30. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Amy's View—Dame Judi Dench is an amazing actress, but can she keep you in your seat for the duration of another one of David Hare's pompous plays? (Just barely.) This one claims to be about the tangled relationship between an actress from theatre's golden age and her modern daughter, who marries an arbiter of pop culture, but it's really about Hare's out-of-touch ideas regarding how today's audiences view theatre—meaning him. Directed by Richard Eyre. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Annie Get Your Gun—A terrific revival of Irving Berlin's solid-gold score. It's played for romance and sass, which the vulnerable and charming Bernadette Peters and the hunky, easygoing Tom Wopat deliver in spades. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Beautiful Thing—Jonathan Harvey's 1993 drama, set in London, about two working-class boys who fall in love. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200. Closes June 27.)

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The Civil War—The musical. Frank Wildhorn wrote the music and book. Jerry Zaks is the director. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Closer—Patrick Marber's slick dissection of the anatomy of desire follows four characters (Natasha Richardson, Anna Friel, Ciaran Hinds, and Rupert Graves) as they meet, mate, and move on in a kind of algebra of solitude which is factored out before our eyes. Marber can be very funny, and his writing is tight and well paced, but his staging is not. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/5/99.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Death of a Salesman—The casting of this production of Arthur Miller's masterpiece is generally uneven, but the show still packs a wallop. (3/8/99) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Dreaming in Cuban—An evening of two solo acts about Cuban culture, performed in a café setting by Eileen Galindo and Michael John Garcés. Garcés tells a slighter story than Galindo, but he shares her ability to engage. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200. Closes June 13.)

East Is East—The children of a Pakistani mother and an English father are torn between cultures, in a drama by Ayub Khan-Din. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Fosse—This steamy revue of works by the choreographer Bob Fosse doesn't reveal anything new about the man behind the dances, but it does remind us why we won't be forgetting him anytime soon. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

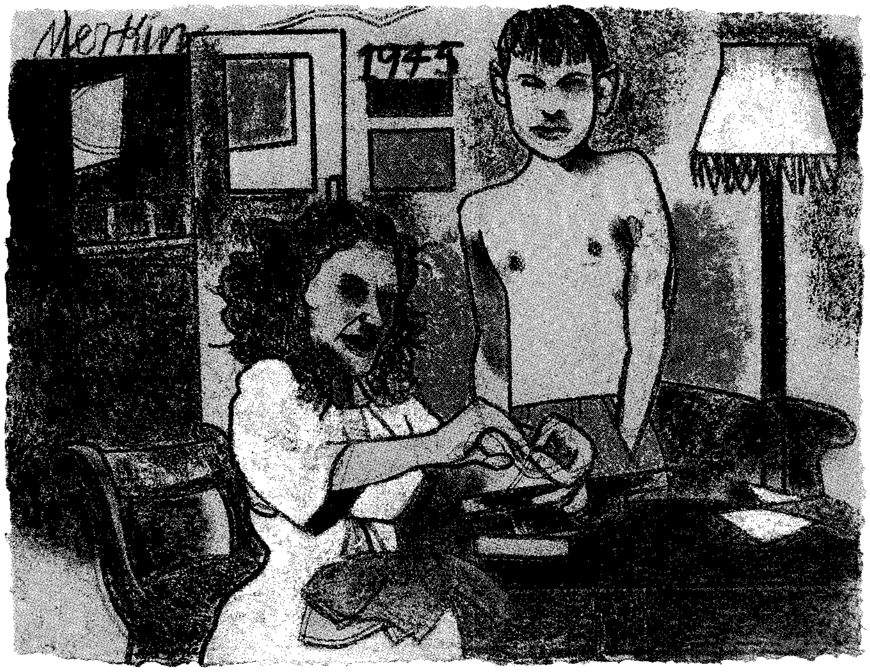
Goodnight Children Everywhere—Richard Nelson's drama is set in London and concerns the reunion of four siblings separated during the Second World War. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

The Iceman Cometh—Eugene O'Neill's despairing, four-and-a-half-hour drama about a barroom full of losers. This beautiful production is a rare opportunity to see a fully realized staging of a masterpiece by America's first great playwright. It has countless rewards, not the least of which is an outstanding ensemble cast that Kevin Spacey, in a brilliant turn as the crazily optimistic salesman Hickey, leads in a way that lights up all the other performances rather than overshadowing them. Howard Davies is the director. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues—A marvellous collection of songs performed by a dynamic cast, in what turns out to be an oddly didactic cabaret act. The music alone could have showcased the influence of the blues, but instead the audience is subjected to explanatory notes and bad-talk-show banter. Fortunately, the blues triumphantly survives even this. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Jails, Hospitals & Hip Hop—Danny Hoch, in an encore engagement of his most recent one-man show. June 1-5 at 8:30. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

The Lonesome West—Martin McDonagh's Irish family drama skips decency and gets right down to barbarity. Coleman Connor (Maelíosa Stafford) has blown his father's head off for some minor insult about his hair style, and to keep his brother, Valene (Brían F. O'Byrne), quiet he's signed his inheritance over to his daft sibling. (We know what belongs to Valene because the chairs, the glassware, and the new stove that crowd their hovel all have



Kali Rocha and Chris Stafford, in "Goodnight Children Everywhere."

RICHARD MERKIN

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a "V" taped to them.) Every once in a while, Coleman takes a running leap at Valene, and they roll on the floor, pounding each other in the theatrical equivalent of a range war, while the ineffectual local priest (David Ganly) looks on in morose bewilderment. In its fierce and vivid infantile fury, McDonagh's play moves effortlessly from slapstick sadism to a parable of the blight of Ireland's violence. Directed by Garry Hynes. (5/24/99) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Night Must Fall—The main problem with this National Actors Theatre production of Emlyn Williams's 1935 thriller is that the play was probably never that thrilling to begin with, and it certainly isn't thrilling in 1999. Big house, rich old lady in a wheelchair, charming stranger? *Please.* (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Not About Nightingales—The first play that Thomas Lanier Williams signed "Tennessee," successfully resuscitated by the Royal National Theatre. It's clearly the work of a tenderfoot, yet the choreographic panache of Trevor Nunn's production invests the script with a poetic stylishness the prose lacks. (3/8/99) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Peter Pan—The former Olympic gymnast Cathy Rigby is back in town to star in a limited engagement of the 1954 musical. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Ring Round the Moon—Christopher Fry's 1950 adaptation of Anouilh's comedy "L'Invitation au Château." Gerald Gutierrez is the director. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Snakebit—Two guys, a gal, and an AIDS test. With all the one-liners and dialogue cued by contemporary culture, this comedy-drama by the actor and first-time playwright David Marshall Grant, like a lot of new plays, seems like a sitcom rewritten for the stage (fewer jokes, more "issues"). The cast, though, is topnotch. (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

Speed Freaks—A business called Paw-Paw's Famous Canned Peas runs into trouble with the narcs, in a thriller by Robert Cucuzza. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes June 13.)

Tennessee Williams Remembered—Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson recall their relationships with the playwright. (ArcLight, 152 W. 71st St. 307-4100. Closes June 13.)

Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight—Peter Ackerman's screwball bedroom comedy starts off slowly, with a couple arguing about who they really are. It's the sort of argument that usually goes no better before midnight, but in this case it quickly escalates into a sublimely ridiculous conference call involving the lovers, the woman's best friend and the friend's lover (a hit man), and her therapist (the hit man's brother) and his lover. The questions about sex and the proper balance between intellectual and physical attraction have no answers, but Ackerman has some interesting suggestions, and, to his credit, comedy outweighs the theorizing. John Rando, the director, has a good comedic eye, and though Andrew Benator and Nicholas Kepros (as the therapist and his lover) create the only three-dimensional characters, the evening comes off beautifully thanks to the tight script and direction. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

This Lime Tree Bower—A delightful tale (by Conor McPherson, who also wrote "The Weir") of three young Irishmen, each of whom goes off the rails in various ways but, with a little help from the other two, is able to put his life back together again. Neatly told as a series of overlapping monologues, the evening is funny and sharply observed, and sweet without being sentimental. A perfect antithesis to this season's blockbusters. Well acted by T. R. Knight, Drew McVety, and Thomas Lyons. The direction, by Harris Yulin, is appropriately low-key. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes June 6.)

Thwak—Comic acrobatics (both physical and vocal) from the Australian performers David Collins and Shane Dundas, a.k.a. the Umbilical Brothers. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

The 2.5 Minute Ride—The comic actress Lisa Kron gets it: unless a personal story resonates with humanity, it alienates. In her solo show, a tale of her trip to Auschwitz with her father (who survived the Holocaust but whose parents did not), which is offset by extremely funny memories of her family's regular excursions to an Ohio amusement park, Kron pulls off the impossible: she makes you feel something like compassion for a Nazi her father interrogated after the war; you still hate him, but he almost seems human. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. Closes June 13.)

Thy Kingdom's Coming—A satire of Hollywood, by the actor and playwright Jeff Daniels. (Neighborhood Playhouse, 340 E. 54th St. 479-8589.)

Via Dolorosa—Because David Hare's lively monologue about his first trip to Israel is about Israelis and Arabs, he sees this work as activism; the advertisements for the show refer to it as a "play." In fact, it is neither. It is a somewhat overproduced ninety-minute after-dinner speech that sheds no new light on the conflict. (3/29/99) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes June 13.)

The Weir—Conor McPherson's play takes place in the musty chill of a backwater Irish pub, where a handful of habitués chew the cud of their solitude, spinning ghostly yarns that fill the air with glimmers of fear and resignation. It has a bittersweet charm, but for all the well-crafted talk and the well-observed bonhomie, it is finally a shaggy-bog story. (4/12/99) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

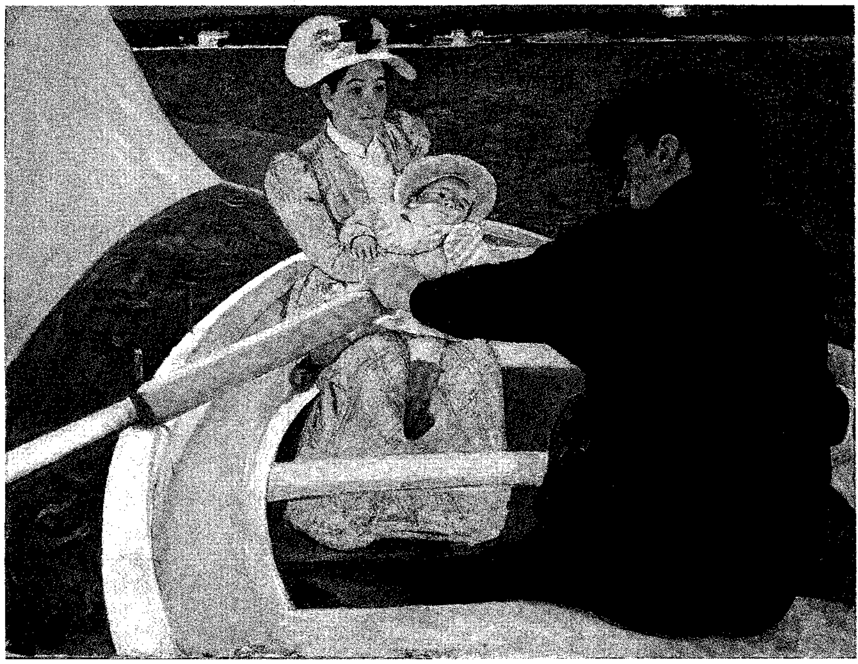
You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown—A nothing burger for audiences of all ages. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ART: Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:**

Her paintings had
a new and different perspective.

A woman's.



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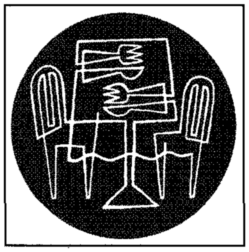
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CABARET:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DE LA GUARDA:** Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOOTLOOSE:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KILLER JOE:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **THE MYSTERY OF IRMA VEP:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Ibis, 327 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **SIDE MAN:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SOUND OF MUSIC:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE:** HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **WIT:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.

TABLES FOR TWO



ROY'S, 130 Washington St., at Albany St. (266-6262)—Roy Yamaguchi's nouvelle-Hawaiian restaurant is no luau, so you can forget about suckling pigs and zombie cocktails. This is Euro-Asian cuisine served California style (fancy wood-oven pizzas, hyper-gregarious staff). Though most of Yamaguchi's restaurants dot the Pacific from Seattle to Guam, his first New York spot seems perversely anti-thematic; the only tropical touch in these generic hotel digs—it's in a Marriott—is the orchid on each table.

A good way to scope out the range of executive chef Troy Guard's skills is to load up on appetizers—from the twists on the familiar (the blue-crab and rock-shrimp potstickers or coconut shrimp on a stick) to the exotic (there's no better place to try the trendy South Seas fish *hamachi*). If you're dining alone, just have the pupu plate all to yourself.

The menu is heavy on specials, but two of the best dishes are always available: the Hong Kong steamed fish (usually red snapper), which is served in sizzling-hot peanut oil with cilantro, and the Chinatown duck with pineapple syrup—it's like eating duck ice cream, and that's a compliment. The accompanying wine list is an interesting, mostly West Coast selection, with smart and helpful comments. (Bonny Doon's great 1997 vintage Critique of Pure Riesling speaks for itself.) From the menu descriptions, the specials may sound overly complicated, too packed with far-flung ingredients, but even if your entrée is crusted and sauced and drizzled, outright missteps are rare here. (One pratfall is the grilled foie-gras sandwich with "caramelized mango and Port passion.") The best specials are built around such South Pacific fish as *ahi*, *shutomi*, and *opakapaka*, which are flown in from Hawaii. The over-the-top surf-and-turf combos should be ignored as a matter of principle (lamb with sea bass?).

Right at the start, let the waiter know you'll be having the hot-chocolate soufflé. So what if it's not Hawaiian? Neither is the décor—although a scowling tiki god or two would have been nice. Have the light and fresh Haupia Napoleon (*kataifi* pastry layered with mango and kiwi) if you absolutely have to finish on a tropical note. (Open weekdays for lunch and dinner, weekends for dinner only. Entrées $17-$28.)

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—June 2 at 8: "Interplay," "Sonatas and Interludes," "Fearful Symmetries," and "Western Symphony." . . . ¶ June 3-5 and June 8 at 8: "Jazz (Six Syncopated Movements)" and the premières of "Duke!" and an untitled collaboration between Peter Martins and Wynton Marsalis. . . . ¶ June 5 at 2: "The Chairman Dances," "Calcium Light Night," "Barber Violin Concerto," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ June 6 at 3: "Who Cares?," "Calcium Light Night," "Tarantella," and "Fearful Symmetries." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 27.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE—June 2 at 2 and 8: "Giselle." . . . ¶ June 3-4 at 8 and June 5 at 2 and 8: "Anastasia." . . . ¶ June 7-8 at 8: "Airs," "Stepping Stones," and "Push Comes to Shove." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 19.)

URBAN BUSH WOMEN—The troupe marks its fifteenth anniversary with a program of works by company founder Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, including "Hands Singing Songs" and Zollar's solo "Self Portrait." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. June 1-5 at 8 and June 6 at 2:30 and 7:30.)

"LIVE COMMUNICATION"—Savion Glover and fellow-tappers Ayodele Casel, Abron Glover, Jason Samuels, and Omar Edwards perform with an onstage quartet and a host of surprise guests who show up nightly to join in the big jam-session finales. (Variety Arts Theatre, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. May 31-June 4 and June 7-8 at 8 and June 5 at 6 and 10. Through June 19.)

SCHOOL OF AMERICAN BALLET—The academy for young Balanchine dancers borrows a program from the parent company for its year-end performance: Balanchine's "Valse Fantaisie" and "Le Tombeau de Couperin," Robbins's "Fanfare," and Christopher Wheeldon's recent première, "Scènes de Ballet." (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. For information about tickets, call 769-6600. June 5 at 2 and 8 and June 7 at 7.)

MARTHA @ MOTHER—The season finale of the dance showcase hosted by Richard Move (in the guise of Martha Graham) features performances by Mark Morris (June 2 and 4), John Kelly (June 3), Stephen Petronio, Douglas Nielsen, Bill Shannon, and Swenglish Dance. (Mother, 875 Washington St. 924-0077. June 2 at 8 and 10 and June 3-4 at 8.)

GOTHAM GROUP DANCE—The eight-member company presents works by six choreographers, including "Say I Am You," by Mia Lawrence; "Late-Night Sugar Flight," by Ben Munisteri; and "Spill," by Aviva Geismar. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. June 3-6 at 8:30.)

The Iceman Melteth.

The Macallan

A CHEQUE DRAWN ON THE BANK OF ICELAND accompanied by a request for six bottles of The Macallan Malt Whisky, started a *lively debate* at the Distillery the other day. Was it wise for these stern countrymen of ice and fire to seek out the mellow blandishments of The Macallan? That billowing sherry-oak redolence, with its hints of the *comfortable South*, should be treated with caution by the hardy sons of ERIK THE RED, argued our Moral Tutor. "A few sips could undo centuries of stoicism." But our Sales Director prevailed, and The Macallan was despatched the same evening. However, if you are planning a trip to Iceland, it might now be wise to include a paper hat and some streamers.

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THE MALT.

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NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Beth Orton—This twenty-eight-year-old English songwriter may carry a glittered guitar and wear glossy red boots, but there's no hiding her Birkenstock heart. She was discovered by Madonna's current producer, techno-wizard William Orbit, but Orton has left the digital bells and whistles behind, turning her latest album, "Central Reservation," into a gorgeous collection of honest, unadorned folk tunes. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. June 3 at 8.)

Jazz at Lincoln Center—Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra accompany the New York City Ballet (see Dance). (New York State Theatre, 870-5570. June 3-5 and June 8 at 8.)

Rammstein—Alienation-inducing industrial German rock. With Soulfly. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. June 4 at 8.)

Santana—It's been thirty years since Carlos and friends sprinkled a little chili pepper into rock and roll. As his guest appearance on Lauryn Hill's début album made vividly clear, his distinctive tone is as strong as ever. With Ozomatli. (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. June 5 at 8.)

Charlie Daniels Band / Marshall Tucker Band / Molly Hatchet—Three of the finest practitioners of the often put-down genre known as Southern rock. Expect ten-gallon hats, long guitar solos, and no "Freebird" (that was another band). (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. June 8 at 8.)

Bell Atlantic Jazz Festival—With their hands now in the deep pockets of a telecommunications giant, the folks at the Knitting Factory (see Jazz and Standards) are ready for world domination when it comes to putting on a metropolitan jazz festival. This year, the festivities extend to Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, but New York gets the full treatment, with ten full-to-bursting days of music. Left of center is still the general stylistic locus, but there are also plenty of mainstream acts getting their licks in. June 3 at noon: The up-and-coming ensembles of Danilo Perez, Stefon Harris, and Jason Moran present a free show in Bryant Park that's worth extending your lunch hour for. (Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.) . . . At the South Street Seaport later that night (at 8:30), things get multi-culti with oud player Rabih Abou-Khalil and his quintet, Don Byron's Latinized Music for Six Musicians, and the Balkan-tinged band Pachora. (Pier 16, East River at Fulton St.) . . . ¶ June 4 at 8: Saxophonist Grover Washington, Jr., plays Town Hall. (123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824.) . . . ¶ June 5 at 8: Jump and jive with Big Bad Voodoo Daddy and the Mingus Big Band at Roseland. (239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171.) For more information about the festival, call 343-8805.

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—June 4: **ed palermo** leads his big band in an evening of Frank Zappa tunes. June 5: Folk oddity **christine lavin.**

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—June 3: **ron sexsmith.** Like the forlorn songs of his colleague Freedy Johnston, Sexsmith's exquisite work is precociously unfashionable. His latest, "Whereabouts," is a gem from start to finish. June 8-11: **cibo matto.** The Japanese-American duo of Miho Hatori and Yuka Honda samples everything from Italian desserts to French pop to Brooklyn hip-hop and fashions it into a candy-coated mix that giddily swings between kitsch and hipster sophistry. The two women keep company with downtown jazz musicians (and Sean Lennon), but Honda's endlessly inventive music and Hatori's singsong malapropisms turn what could easily be affected noodling into the musical equivalent of a delicious buffet.

Cibo Matto, at the Bowery Ballroom.

JEAN-CLAUDE GÖTTING

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—June 2: **pink martini.** This ensemble from Portland, Oregon, wowed the fabulous on the Cannes party circuit last year (Sharon Stone danced onstage while they played), but that accomplishment hardly addresses the beautiful and sophisticated music of Pink Martini. Led by Harvard graduate and classically trained pianist Thomas M. Lauderdale, the band moves gracefully between such genres as Cuban rumbas and French café tunes. Vocalist China Forbes is captivating, and Lauderdale's piano keeps the passionate rhythm section in line. The group's independent release, "Sympathique," is breathtaking. The **mingus big band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—June 3: Harmonica master **charlie musselwhite** has appeared with everyone from Tom Waits to Cuban singer Eliades Ochoa. In recent years, his singing and guitar playing have grown as assured as his harmonica work. An important link between the present and the classic sounds of sixties South Side Chicago (where he got his start), Musselwhite is a tireless experimenter whose terrific new album, "Continental Drifter," drops Brazilian and Cuban musicians (including Ochoa) into his bedrock blues.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—June 2: The **michael schenker group** and **vinnie moore.** Two head-banging guitar heroes give a master class in playing as fast as humanly possible. June 4: **clarence (gatemouth) brown** is past seventy, but you'd never know it from his sinewy sound. Like virtually every other Texas blues guitarist of the past half-century, he owes much to T-Bone Walker, but, unlike his fellow-disciples, he's always sought to expand the vocabulary of the blues, mixing in elements of country, Cajun, and jazz. And when he picks up that electric fiddle, watch out.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—June 6: Home-grown ska pioneers the **toasters.** June 8: **magma,** a thirty-year-old French progressive-rock collective with a cult following.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **maureen mc govern** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through June 6: The **zawinul syndicate.** Zawinul is best remembered as the overlord of Weather Report, but these days he successfully traffics in fusion-jazz, incorporating Latin and African strains into his synth-driven musical universe.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wrap-around pastel murals, and, through June 26, **bobby short.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **barbara carroll** is in attendance.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through June 6: The **phil woods** quintet. Woods breathes bop. An alto saxophonist who speaks fluent Parker while indulging his own alternately flashy and ripely romantic take on the music, Woods—forty years down the line—is playing better than ever. For some three decades, he's also fronted a tight small band that is founded on his symbiotic relationship with his longtime drummer, Bill Goodwin. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **les paul.**

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—**pete (la roca) sims** and **swingtime** are on hand June 2-6. Drummer Sims stood at the head of the second rank when he was coming up in the sixties, but now he's firmly ensconced in the big leagues. He leads a spirited hard-bop band featuring saxophonists **dave liebman** and **don braden,** trumpeter **eddie henderson,** and pianist **joanne brackeen.** Dining.

Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. (539-8770)—June 3-5 and June 7: Chanteuse **ute lemper.**

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—The Bell Atlantic Jazz Festival (see also Concerts) begins on June 3 with a handy seminar on modern saxophone styles, when **steve coleman** and **five elements,** the **ravi coltrane** quartet, and **renagades way**—featuring Coleman, Coltrane, **greg osby,** and **gary thomas**—hit the stage. The once roaring, now mellowed saxophonist **pharoah sanders** takes over on June 4. . . . ¶ June 5: **sephardic tinge,** the **gerri allen** quartet, and the **t. s. monk** sextet provide a nice mix. . . . ¶ Good old-fashioned avant-garde jazz returns June 6, with **equal interest** (featuring flutist **joseph jarman,** violinist **leroy jenkins,** and pianist **myra melford**), **henry threadgill's** quintet, and a trio of old buddies: drummer **bobby previte,** keyboardist **wayne horvitz,** and trombonist **ray anderson.**

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—The **jazz message** unites three former members of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers—saxophonists **donald harrison** and **john toussaint** and bassist **lonnie plaxico**—with pianist **stephen scott** and drummer **ralph peterson** to recall the hard-bop glory days. Dining.

Tonic, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—June 3: Brazilian percussionist **CYRO BAPTISTA** mixes it up with Canadian guitarist **KEVIN BREIT.** June 4: The **KOMODO WHIRLIGIG ORCHESTRA,** the latest brainchild of drummer **BILLY MARTIN.** June 5: Guitarist **MARC RIBOT** joins saxophonist **JOHN ZORN,** bassist **JAMAALADEEN TACUMA,** and drummer **CALVIN WESTON.**

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through June 6: The vocalist **TERI THORNTON** made some promising recordings in the early sixties, but she hasn't cut an album since then. Now she begins the second act of her professional life, after having wowed the judges at the 1998 Thelonious Monk Jazz International Jazz Vocals Competition. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

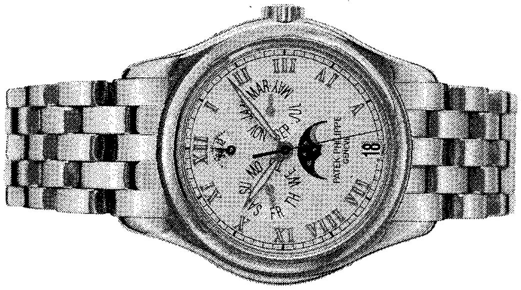
ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Cézanne to van Gogh: The Collection of Dr. Gachet." In van Gogh's 1890 portrait of Dr. Paul-Ferdinand Gachet, the subject looks literally blue. Sitting listlessly against a background of pure cobalt, the weary doctor seems far more depressed than his famous patient, who committed suicide a few months later. In fact, however, "Dr. Saffron" (so called for his variably *tinted red hair*) was a tireless enthusiast of avant-garde art, whose appreciation often exceeded that of the artists themselves. By purchase, gift, and trade (art for medical services), he eventually filled his house near Paris with paintings by Monet, Pissarro, Guillaumin, Sisley, Renoir, and, above all, Cézanne and van Gogh. More than fifty of these works have travelled across the Atlantic for the first time. A handful, including self-portraits by van Gogh and Guillaumin, would be on anyone's list of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist greatest hits. The majority, though, are fascinating oddities—minor, unfinished, or transitional works, the kind that blossom under an indulgent eye. Doubts about their authenticity have occasionally been raised, but a selection of Gachet's own paintings, and those of his equally talentless son, effectively squelch the idea that either was a capable forger. If anything explains Gachet's forlorn demeanor, it must have been the thought of his own artistic abilities. Through Aug. 15. . . . ¶ "Devotions and Diversions: Prints and Books from the Late Middle Ages in Northern Europe." Through Aug. 29. . . . ¶ "Prayer for a Queen: The Hours of Jeanne D'Évreux" takes advantage of the rebinding of the illuminated manuscript to display thirty-two images from the prayer book belonging to the fourteenth-century French queen. Through Aug. 29. . . . ¶ "Our New Clothes: Acquisitions of the 1990s in the Costume Institute." Through Aug. 22. . . . ¶ "Picasso: Painter and Sculptor in Clay." Through June 6. . . . ¶ "Guardians of the Longhouse: Art in Borneo." . . . ¶ "Hans Hofmann at the Metropolitan Museum." . . . ¶ "Gustave Moreau: Between Epic and Dream." Through Aug. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Collecting in Depth: Drawings by Grosz, Schwitters, Ernst, and Klee." Through July 20. . . . ¶ "Alfred Hitchcock: Behind the Silhouette." Through Aug. 17. . . . ¶ "Sigmar Polke: Works on Paper, 1963-74." Through June 16. . . . ¶ "Projects 68: William Kentridge" presents "Stereoscope," a new eight-minute film by the South African animator, along with thirty of the sixty-five large charcoal drawings it was made from. Through June 8. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Surrealism: Two Private Eyes" offers paintings, photographs, sculp-



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tures, books, and ephemera from the collections of Nesuhi Ertegun and Daniel Filipacchi. Opens June 4. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"The American Century: Art & Culture 1900-2000 (Part I: 1900-50)." The first half of America's mid-career retrospective, installed on all five floors, includes Grant Wood's "American Gothic," Ben Shahn's "The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti," Alfred Stieglitz's "The Steerage," Georgia O'Keeffe's "Summer Days," and Jackson Pollock's "Number 27." Through Aug. 22. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"A Voice of Conscience: The Prints of Jack Levine." Through June 20. . . . ¶ "Domestic Transformations: Working in Brooklyn" is a homemaking-themed show by borough artists Ron Baron, Andy Yoder, Jean Blackburn, and Ann Agee. Through June 13. . . . ¶ "Mariko Mori: Empty Dream." A survey of this young Japanese artist's five-year career, in which she, depending on your point of view, either embodies the best (so far) of cross-cultural, neo-Pop extravagance or panders to low-brow taste with costly production values and glitzy special effects. Mori's earlier works underscore affiliations with Japanimation and with theatrical self-portraiture of past decades, in particular Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Stills." Mori's more recent 3-D video works employ extraordinary digital effects, as in "Nirvana" (1996-97): the artist as haloed bodhisattva (or something close to it) takes center stage, while her techno-enhanced handmaidens sit in the lotus position and zoom around on disks of flame. Through Aug. 15. . . . ¶ "Impressionists in Winter: Effets de Neige" presents snow scenes by Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, Gauguin, and friends. Through Aug. 29. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"Epidemic! The World of Infectious Disease" revisits a popular exhibit from the turn of the century in which the museum focussed on tuberculosis. The current and broader look at infectious diseases includes giant models of viruses and bacteria which appear to spread across the galleries, a diorama of a "high-containment" laboratory, and a sculpted re-creation of an outbreak of the Black Plague showing rats running down the ropes of ships into fourteenth-century Venice. Through Sept. 6. . . . ¶ "The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition." Through Oct. 11. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

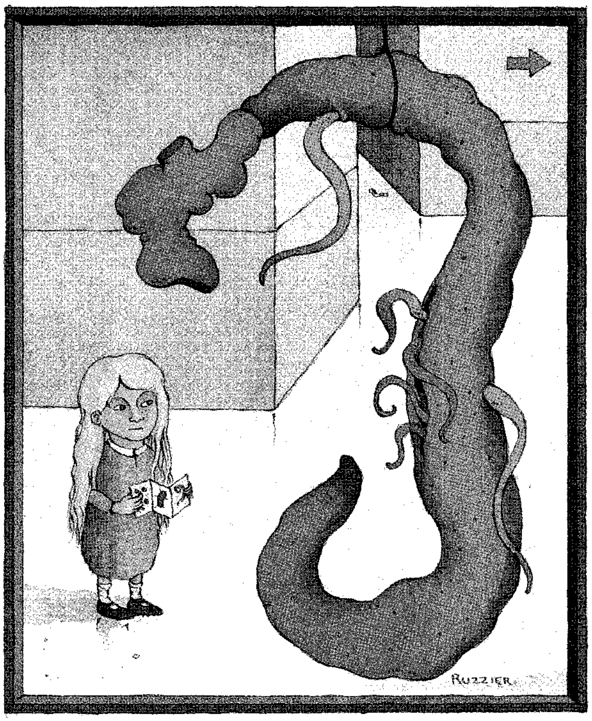
Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. (288-0700)—For more than three hundred years, a manuscript known to scholars as the Medieval Housebook has belonged to the German house of Waldburg Wolfegg. A strange collection of military, metallurgical, and astrological texts in four languages, the manuscript probably dates from the late fifteenth century, but the identities of its illustrators remain a mystery. Whoever they were, they were fantastic: the panoramic renderings of military encampments, mining works, and courtly gardens are captivating, with plenty of tenderly observed and frequently bawdy details. Better still is a group of related drypoints by one of the likely Housebook suspects, known as the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet. These include dogs scratching, peasants wrestling, and Aristotle humiliating himself for love, all drawn with a graphic delicacy that prefigures Dürer. The Wolfeggs have never loaned their treasures before, and probably won't again anytime soon, so this is a show not to be missed. Through July 25. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Brett Bigbee—Calm, dreamlike paintings of the artist's family. Bigbee's compositions are Spartan: his wife and son, generally nude, stare out at us from nearly every picture. Around them, assorted items—chairs, a pink toy truck, a dead bird, a sprig of ivy in a glass—are rendered with uniformly meticulous attention. There are moments of preciousness (that dead bird), but these are marvellous paintings, with a rare, distilled intensity. The highlight of the show, a portrait of the artist wearing boxer shorts and cradling an infant in one arm, has the tender formality of a Bellini altarpiece. Through June 4. (De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050.)

Ellsworth Kelly—"Spectrums 1953-1972." After quietly working throughout much of the seventies and eighties on the periphery of the art world's attention, this grand master of abstraction has reëmerged in the nineties very near the center. Perhaps this has something to do with the reinvigoration of the medium of painting, abstract and otherwise, during these years; perhaps it's just credit due. In any case, the "Spectrums" are relatively unknown to today's audience (none were included in the artist's recent Guggenheim retrospective). Almost dry in their quasi-Minimalist reduction to vertical, rectangular stripes of color, they nevertheless sustain the sort of vivid coloristic jolt one expects from Kelly. Through June 26. (Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 744-7400.)



"Epidemic! The World of Infectious Disease," at the American Museum of Natural History.

Short List—**JOHN ALEXANDER** and **TOMÁS SANCHEZ**, Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Open Mondays; both shows through June 26. . . . **CARLOS ALFONZO**, Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665. Through June 30. . . . **JOSEPH BEUYS**, Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Open Mondays; through July 9. . . . **ERIC FISCHL**, Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929. Through June 26. . . . **CHARLES HENRI FORD**, Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through July 2. . . . **PETER HALLEY**, Grant Selwyn Fine Art, 37 W. 57th St. 755-0434. Through June 5. . . . **SERGIO HERNANDEZ**, Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. 399-5510. Through June 4. . . . **PER KIRKEBY**, Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550. Through June 11. . . . **JULIAN SCHNABEL**, Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292. Through June 5. (See also Downtown Short List.) . . . **SEAN SCULLY**, Danese, 41 E. 57th St., 223-2227; Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St., 315-0470. Both shows through June 11. . . . **BERNARDO SICILIANO**, Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545. Through June 11. . . . **MAY STEVENS**, Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669. Through Aug. 27. . . . **SARAH SUPPLEE**, Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907. Through June 5. . . . **JIM TOUCHTON**, Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345. Through June 26. . . . **CY TWOMBLY**, Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through June 12. . . . **STANFORD WHITE**, Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. 838-0333. Through June 11.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Joy Garnett—The explosive impact of Abstract Expressionism, with its unprecedented scale and simplicity, has often been compared to that of atomic fission, but the two Manhattan Projects of the forties have seldom been linked as neatly as they are in this exhibition of Cold War flash cards, painted from declassified photographs of bomb tests. "Priscilla," full of rippling clouds of orange heat, shows a Pollocky maelstrom expanding into a tranquil blue sky. "Cherry Bomb," with its jagged fragments of pink and cadmium, is a thermonuclear color-field painting. Through June 5. (Debs, 529 W. 20th St. 647-7080.)

Gary Gissler—Graphite and gesso on varnished panels or paper. Most of Gissler's works exploit the ever-popular effect of Pollockian alloverness—stray words, phrases, and sentences typically cover the entire panel. In some cases, they float relatively freely on the surface, unmoored from the modernist logic of the grid that usually supports them. Injecting often scabrous content into an ossified form is nowadays an almost rote technique for achieving a certain dubious novelty (see, for example, Ellen Gallagher's trite riffs on race, contained in an Agnes Martin-ish grid), but Gissler's logorrheic streams of text owe more to the Sean Landers idiom of personal confession, abjection, and tirade. They work. Through June 5. (Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930.)

Liz Larner—Three sculptures by this Los Angeles-based artist. Larner has been absent from the New York scene for far too long, and these works are a welcome return. Larner has always been a formalist gone haywire, long before the current formalist renaissance. Grave, elegant, perhaps a little eerie, these works continue to build on Minimalism and post-Minimalism without seeming like retreads of the glorious past. "Ignis (Fake)" (1999), for example, is a jangled block of chartreuse cubes set on a high pedestal, further heightening its tenuous sense of equilibrium: a formalist nervous breakdown. Through June 19. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121.)

Christian Schumann—Paintings, some of which incorporate drawings as collage elements. Some of the works here hark back to the artist's earlier style of disparate cartoon types wandering through vaporous backgrounds, with the odd text snippet thrown in for good measure. In others, Schumann experiments with a range of different styles, some suggestive of Peter Saul meets Japanimation. The largest picture here is in the form of an enormous acrostic, except the blocks of letters seem to advance and

SERGIO RUZZIER

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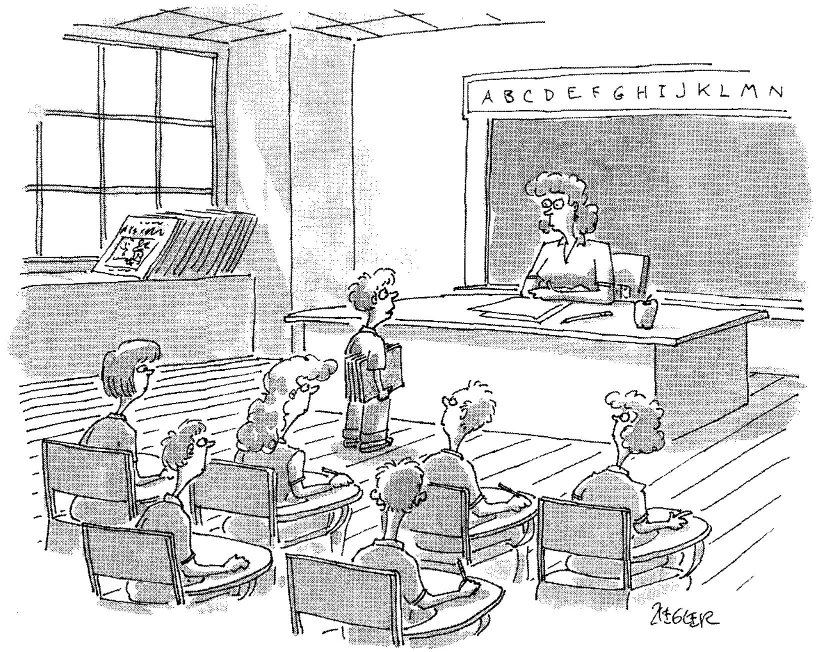
Helping to Bring Missing Children Home

"Have you seen me?" It was hard to miss the 2,200 New York City school children who filled an entire hockey rink at Chelsea Piers in New York one spring morning last week. Canon and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) coordinated the educational event to talk to these children about safety issues and to commemorate National Missing Children's Day by having these students represent the number of kids who are reported missing in this country every day. Hard to believe that 2,200 bright faces just vanish without a trace every day, but as the children, parents, teachers, city officials, the press, and other guests gathered at the event learned—there is hope and there are ways to help.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"If I could hand out these color prints of the photos I took on my summer vacation, Miss Meehan, there would no longer be any need for me to actually deliver my essay on that very same subject."

The educational assembly was held on May 27th coinciding with the week National Missing Children's Day takes place and was underwritten by Canon, a major sponsor of NCMEC's "Picture Them Home" campaign. Canon is using its state-of-the-art technology products and its position as a "visual communications" powerhouse to help achieve the campaign's two goals: To educate the public to look closely at missing children posters and photos—how one out of seven missing children are found; and, to encourage parents to have updated photos of their own children readily available.

The Canon "Bring Missing Children Home" program includes:

- A fifty-five-foot-long customized truck that will travel cross-country to special events and is equipped to create photo ID cards for children and their parents
- A national poster campaign to distribute thousands of posters with missing children photos to schools and other venues in local communities
- A print and broadcast advertising Public Service Announcement campaign
- And, the donation of Canon Color Bubble Jet printers, PowerShot digital cameras, CanoScan color scanners, and other equipment to the Missing Persons units of law enforcement agencies in more than thirty cities nationwide.

Canon's product donation provides police with the ability to create their own customized missing children flyers in just hours, as opposed to previous methods that required up to three days. When every minute counts in the search for a missing child, the Canon products really make a difference.

"Time is the enemy in the search for a missing child," says Ernie Allen, president of the NCMEC. "Technology becomes the key to closing the gap we now have in response time. Since the first twelve hours a child is missing are the most critical," says Allen, "Canon's printers, scanners, and digital cameras have given law enforcement a powerful tool that we think will bring more missing children home."

Providing cutting-edge technology products has been a hallmark of Canon for more than sixty years. A pioneer in optics and lenses, imaging and Bubble Jet printing, Canon is recognized as a $24 billion worldwide technology leader. This dedication to creating superior products allows Canon to be a valuable partner to organizations such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and its law enforcement network.

For more information about the Canon "Bring Missing Children Home" program, visit us at **www.picturethemhome.com**.

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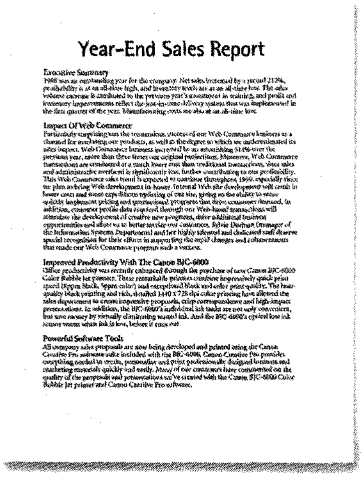
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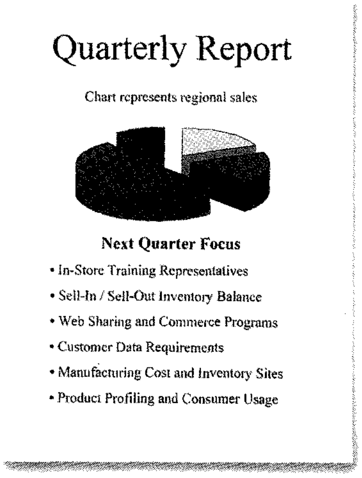
Quarterly Report

Chart represents regional sales

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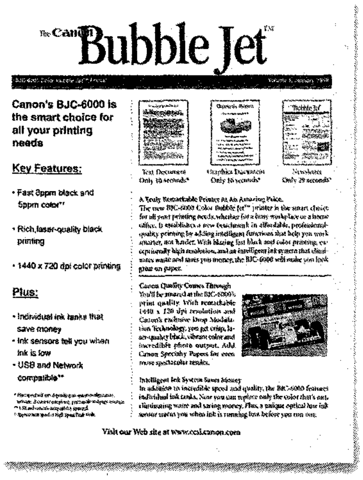
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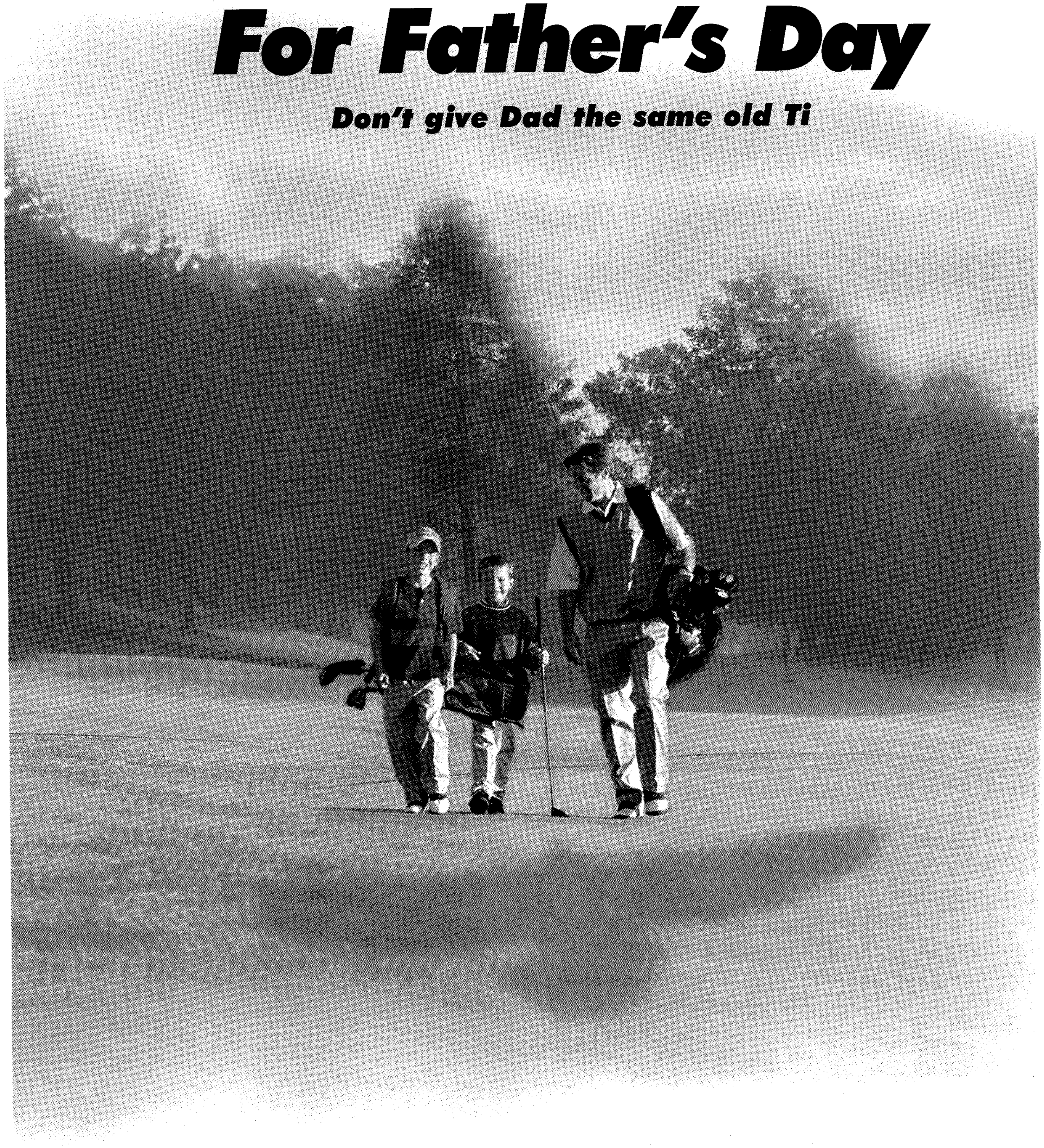

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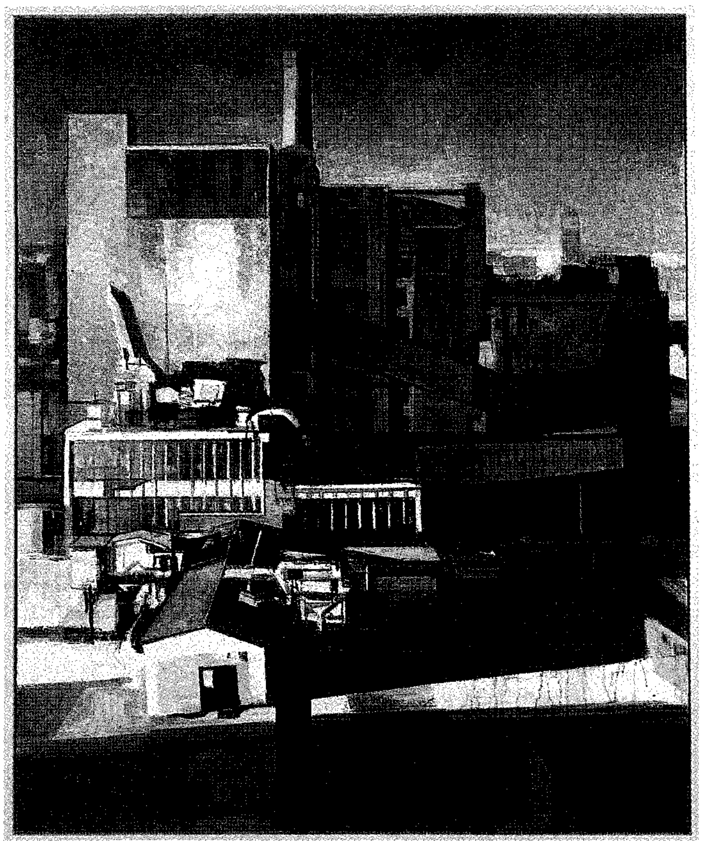


A cityscape by Bernardo Siciliano, at Forum (see Uptown Short List).

recede in a slightly Escherish fashion. Through June 19. (Postmasters, 459 W. 19th St. 727-3323.)

Rirkrit Tiravanija—"Untitled, 1999 (tomorrow can shut up and go away)." Tiravanija continues to rifle through postwar avant-garde history, offering in each new show another amusing, charming, annoying, and pointed tweak of the art world, all within the context of art as fun. In 1997, he created a super-cheap, half-scale version of Philip Johnson's Glass House within the precincts of MOMA's sculpture garden (another Johnson design). The modernesque shack was meant to function as a playroom for kids. In this show, Tiravanija has re-created his entire apartment within the gallery, with a working kitchen and bathroom, bed, posters, knickknacks, etc. Purists might complain that Lucas Samaras did much the same thing in the early sixties. The difference: Samaras lived inside his bedroom at the gallery; Tiravanija simply hired one of his students from Columbia to do the living for him. Smart. Through Aug. 31. (Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. 627-5258.)

Terry Winters—"Graphic Primitives," new paintings and a suite of woodcuts. In recent years, Winters has moved away from the oversensitive, sometimes even drab iconography of biomorphic blobs, seeds, and ova, which populated his works of the eighties. The new paintings are aggressive, full of violent colors, and by no means touchy-feely. Linear jets of paint circulate frantically in these works, providing plenty of optical overload and suggesting a mind or a city teetering on the brink. It's tacky to refer to them as paintings for the millennium, but they certainly smack more of "Blade Runner" than of Monet at Giverny. Through June 25. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200.)

Short List—**JOSÉ BEDIA,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through July 3. . . . **LINDA BURNHAM,** Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555. Through June 25. . . . **GÜNTER BRUS,** Gasser & Grunert, 524 W. 19th St. 807-9494. Through June 19. . . . **IVAN CHERMAYEFF,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through June 26. . . . **MARISA TELLERÍA DIEZ,** Baumgartner, 418 W. 15th St. 633-2276. Through June 30. . . . **MANUEL ESNOZ,** Kravets/Wehby, 529 W. 21st St. 352-2238. Through June 12. . . . **AKI FUJIYOSHI,** AC Project Room, 645-4970. Through June 26. . . . **RACHEL HARRISON,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through June 19. . . . **JON KESSLER,** Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 206-9100. Through June 4. . . . **YOUNG SUN LIM,** Liebman Magnan, 552 W. 24th St. 255-3225. Through June 26. . . . **SHIRIN NESHAT,** D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460. Through June 19. . . . **MICHELLE ROLLMAN,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Through June 26. . . . **PAULINE STELLA SANCHEZ,** Cristinerose, 529 W. 20th St. 206-0297. Through June 26. . . . **TONY SMITH,** Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105. Through July 15. . . . **HIRO YAMAGATA,** Marlborough, 211 W. 19th St. 463-8634. Through June 25.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Ashley Bickerton—Prankish and grotesque paintings by an artist who moved to Bali a few years ago and declared that he wanted to be known for all professional and legal purposes as Cat Stevens. Since then, Bickerton/Stevens learned to handle an airbrush with aplomb, producing a collection of images that either parody or embody a teenagerish fantasy life. Decapitated heads grimace atop long, wavering stalks. A nude vampire nurses a piglet. Vultures descend upon a wounded golfer. The desired response seems to be "heh-heh," but it's more likely to be a dispirited "huh?" Through June 26. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. 966-6160.)

Philip Taaffe—Mixed-medium pattern paintings, concocted from photographic images of starfish, seed cones, animal skulls, and dragonflies. Printed in appetizing pinks and blues and golds, these elegant, vaguely exotic natural forms project an air of calculated hedonism. Most of the time, however, Taaffe is content to lay them across the canvas in static patterns, as if each painting were a tray of unusual hors d'œuvres. An opulent but inert show. Through June 19. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828.)

Short List—**ERIC CHAN AND HEATHER SCHATZ,** Basilico Fine Arts, 26 Wooster St. 966-1831. Through June 5. . . . **LENA CRONQVIST,** Collins, 83 Grand St. 226-1861. Through June 5. . . . **TRACEY EMIN,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through June 19. . . . **NOBU FUKUI,** Central Fine Arts, 596 Broadway. 966-8836. Through June 12. . . . **LISA KRIVACKA,** Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 7; Sundays, 1 to 6; through July 6. . . . **GUILLERMO KUITCA,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through June 12. . . . **VIRGIL MARTI,** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Through June 12. . . . **ANTOINE PEVSNER,** Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441. Through July 10. . . . **MARTIN RAMIREZ,** Kind, 136 Greene St. 925-1200. Through July 31. . . . **ART ROSENBAUM,** Blue Mountain, 121 Wooster St. 941-9753. Through June 9. . . . **HUBERT SCHMALIX,** Erben, 476 Broome St. 966-5283. Through June 12. . . . **JULIAN SCHNABEL,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through June 5.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Sotheby's—June 2: Pre-Columbian art. . . . ¶ June 3-4: A two-day auction of Latin-American paintings includes important works by Rivera, Tamayo, Lam, and Botero. . . . ¶ June 5: Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern antiquities. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Christie's—June 2-3: Latin-American art, including notable pieces by Rivera, Lam, and Matta. . . . ¶ June 3: Ancient glass pieces. . . . ¶ June 4: Antiquities. . . . ¶ June 8: Fine wines. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

Doyle—Twentieth-century paintings, sculptures, furniture, and decorative art. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. June 7.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Leah Demchick / "Audrey Style"—Gum-bichromate color images of India. / Portraits of the girl everybody fell in love with, by such photographers as Cecil Beaton, Philippe Halsman, Raymond Voinquel, and Bob Willoughby. Both shows through June 12. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)

"Clothes Off"—A group show of nudes by, among others, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Judy Dater, Bruce Davidson, André Kertész, and Edward Weston. Through July 2. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510.)

"Down from Up"—Classic and contemporary images made from an elevated vantage point, by such artists as Alvin Langdon Coburn, Diane Cook, Mario Giacomelli, Emmet Gowin, Len Jenshel, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. Through July 9. (Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Closed Tuesdays.)

"Hungary Today: 5 Contemporary Photographers"—A survey of recent work by Gabor Kerekes, Zsolt Peter Barta, Lenke Szilagyi, Judit M. Horvath, and Gyorgy Stalter. Through June 12. (Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767.)

"Pure Products of America"—A three-artist group show of black-and-white photographs of suburban life by Robert Adams, Bill Owens, and Henry Wessel. Through July 16. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200.)

"To the Moon!"—Vintage NASA photographs from the space program. Through June 30. (Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363.)

International Center of Photography—"Newman's Gift: 60 Years of Photography," a retrospective of the portraitist Arnold Newman's career. Through June 6. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Short List—**MERRY ALPERN,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through July 1. . . . **DIETER APPELT** and **JOHN SZARKOWSKI,** Pace Wildenstein

MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Both shows through June 12. . . . **DAVID BERG,** Carter, 560 Broadway. 966-1933. Through June 12. . . . **SASHA BEZZUBOV** and **AUGUST SANDER,** Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 989-7600. Both shows through July 2. . . . **GIANNI BERENGO GARDIN,** Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon; through June 19. . . . **FRANK GOHLKE** and **STUART KLIPPER,** Dorsky, 379 West Broadway. 966-6170. Through June 26. . . . **ANDREA MODICA,** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through June 26. . . . **TINA MODOTTI AND EDWARD WESTON,** Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. 223-1059. Through July 17. . . . **TRACEY MOFFATT,** Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2753. Through June 25. . . . **WILLIAM MORTENSEN,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through June 26. . . . **RAY MORTENSON,** Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through June 4. . . . **ARNOLD NEWMAN,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Through June 19. . . . **FLIP SCHULKE** and **JOEL MEYEROWITZ,** Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300. Both shows through June 25. . . . **CINDY SHERMAN,** Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through June 26. . . . **SUSAN UNTERBERG,** Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Through July 2. . . . **PAUL WOLFF,** Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through June 19.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall is 247-7800, and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 501-3330.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—The company's Met in the Parks series opens with "La Bohème," featuring sopranos Hei-Kyung Hong and Ainhoa Arteta, tenor Marcello Giordani, and baritone Earle Patriarco. Marco Armiliato conducts. (Great Lawn, Central Park. June 8 at 8. No tickets necessary. In case of questionable weather, call 362-6000.)

Encompass Music Theatre—Presenting staged performances of Britten's dramatic cantata "Phaedra" (featuring soprano Elizabeth Keusch) and George Antheil's one-act opera "Venus in Africa." (Salon Theatre, 432 E. 91st St. June 2 and June 4-5 at 8 and June 6 at 3. Through June 13. For information about tickets, call 594-7880.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "The Merry Widow," in English. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. June 5 at 7:30 and June 6 at 2:30. Through June 20.)

Elysian Opera Group—The ensemble offers a concert performance of Mozart's "La Clemenza di Tito." (Merkin Concert Hall. June 7 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Kurt Masur conducting. June 3 and June 5 at 8, June 4 at 11 A.M., and June 8 at 7:30: Tan Dun's Concerto for Water Percussion and Orchestra, which here receives its première (featuring the Philharmonic's principal percussionist, Christopher Lamb), continues the composer's slosh along the watery path of experimentation which began with his "Ghost Opera" (which included the sound of a submerged gong being bowed). For this concerto, he and Mr. Lamb spent weeks discovering a panoply of underwater percussion effects and inventing new instruments viable for such applications. Completing the program are two other works featuring principal players of the orchestra—William Grant Still's "Romance" (originally for saxophone, but in this transcription played by trombonist Joseph Alessi) and Strauss's Oboe Concerto (with Joseph Robinson)—in addition to Strauss's "Till Eulenspiegel." . . . ¶ June 5 at 2: A Young People's Concert comprising the Tan Dun concerto and "Till Eulenspiegel." (875-5030.)

Eos Orchestra—Jonathan Sheffer leads the chamber orchestra and violinist Joshua Bell in a suite from John Corigliano's score for the movie "The Red Violin," a week before the film opens in New York. Schnittke's "Moz-Art à la Haydn," Bartók's "Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta," and Bach's Concerto for Two Violins (with Mr. Bell and Eric Wyrick) complete the program. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. June 3 at 8. For information about tickets, call 691-6415.)

New York Virtuoso Singers—Harold Rosenbaum directs twentieth-century choral works by Babbitt, Stravinsky, Stockhausen, Britten, and others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. June 5 at 8. For information about tickets, call 914-763-3453.)

Choral Symphony Society and New York Cantata Singers—David Labovitz directs Handel's oratorio "Saul," with the Brazilian bass Israel Pessoa in the title role. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. June 6 at 3. For information about tickets, call 864-7541.)

Stonewall Chorale—Nancy Vang directs the choir, an orchestra, and several soloists in Stravinsky's "Symphony of Psalms" and Arvo Pärt's "Berliner Messe." (Merkin Concert Hall. June 6 at 8.)

New Amsterdam Singers—Clara Longstreth leads the premières of compositions by Ronald Perera and Behzad Ranjbaran, in addition to works by Paul Alan Levi, Ernst Toch, Foss, and Milhaud (excerpts from "Les Deux Cités"). (Merkin Concert Hall. June 8 at 8.)

RECITALS

Music by Barber—The composer's complete chamber music, solo-piano music, and songs, plus a selection of his orchestral works, are offered in the course of four concerts at the Kaye Playhouse. June 2: Kenneth Klein conducts the New York Virtuosi Chamber Symphony in the "Capricorn Concerto," Adagio (Op. 11), "Knoxville: Summer of 1915" (featuring soprano Ruth Golden), "A Hand of Bridge" (a miniature chamber opera), Serenade for Strings, and "Medea's Dance of Vengeance." . . . ¶ June 3: Pianist Leon Bates performs "Excursions," "Interlude I (Adagio for Jeanne)," "Nocturne—Homage to John Field," "Souvenirs" (for piano four-hands, with Norman Krieger assisting), Ballade, and Sonata. . . . ¶ June 4: An evening of Barber's songs, performed by mezzo-soprano Leah Summer, baritone Christòpheren Nomura, and pianist Steven Blier. . . . ¶ June 5: The "Hermit Songs" and the song cycle "Despite and Still" (with soprano Karen Holvik, baritone Robert Osborne, and Mr. Krieger), the Cello Sonata (with Robert deMaine), the "Summer Music" (featuring the Sylvan Winds), the Canzone (with violinist Livia Sohn), and, with the Manhattan String Quartet, the composer's String Quartet and "Dover Beach" (with Mr. Osborne spotlighted in the latter). (Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Evenings at 8.)

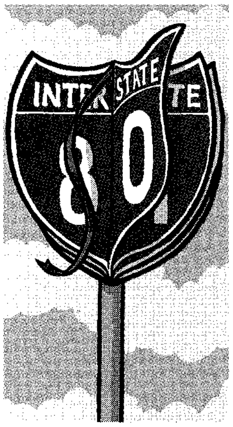
Bargemusic—June 3 at 7:30 and June 6 at 4: Violinist Mark Peskanov, his long-standing sweetheart (the soprano DeBorge Pinnington), his brother (Alexandre, a pianist), and his sister-in-law (Lu Ann Peskanov, a flutist) are joined by violist Nicholas Cords and cellist Zuill Bailey in a concert that comprises Mozart's D-Major Flute Quartet, Mozart and Puccini arias, and Brahms's "Paganini Variations" (for piano) and G-Minor Piano Quartet . . . . ¶ June 4 at 7:30: Prokofiev's Flute Sonata and F-Minor Violin Sonata, plus a selection of Russian romances for voice, violin, and piano, performed by the above four familiar musicians. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

Locrian Chamber Players—The ensemble, which specializes in music that is less than a decade old, presents seven such pieces: George Crumb's "Easter Dawning," "Quest," and "Mundus Canis" (the last two featuring guitarist David Starobin), Robert Carl's "Magic Act," David Macdonald's "Sic," and John Kreckler's "Night Songs." (Christ

BOOK CURRENTS

Blacktop

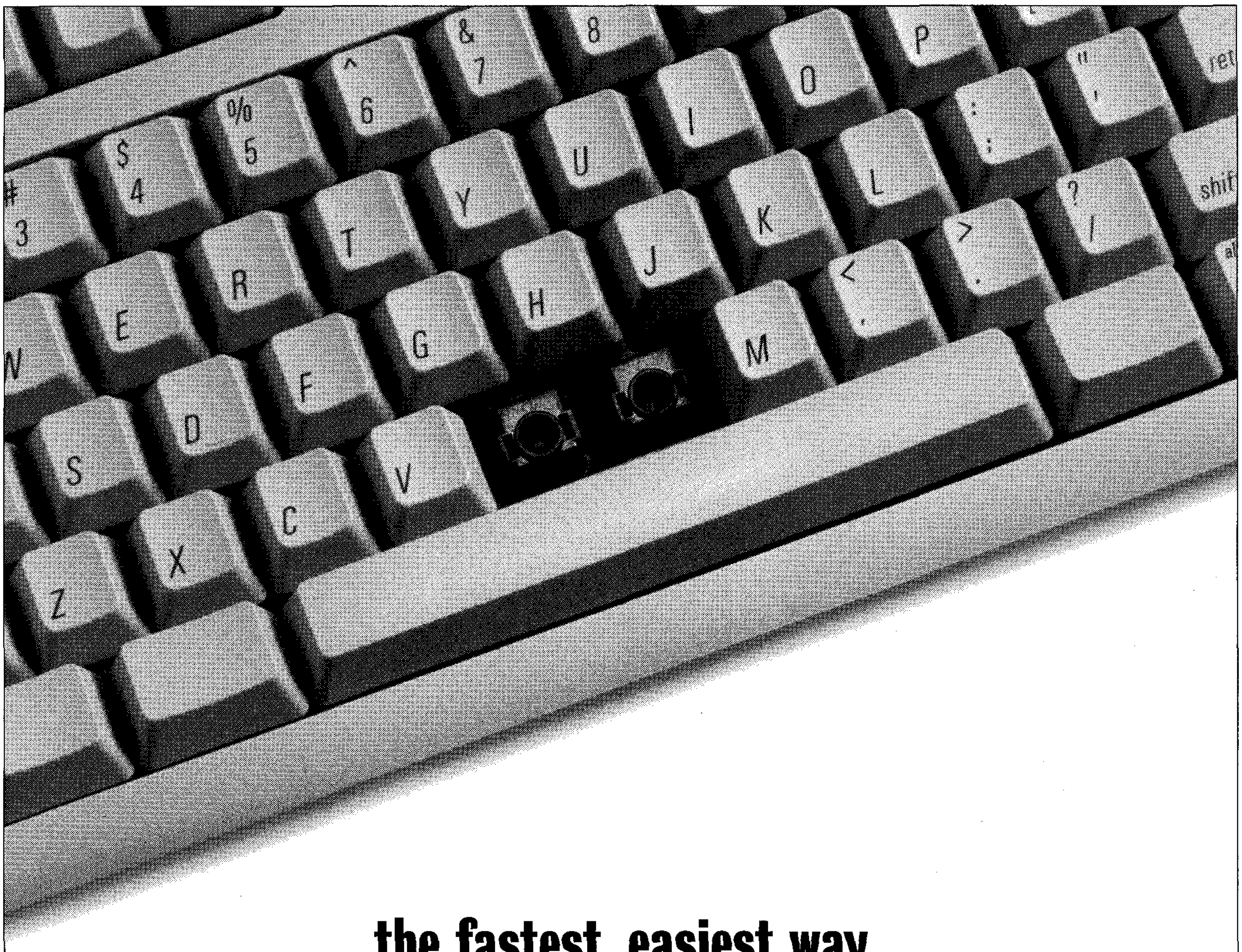
"THERE is no truth but in transit," Emerson wrote, yet it appears that we all have our own idea of what makes road trips truth-revealing—and irresistible. In **The Distance to the Moon** (Riverhead), a new addition to the ever-expanding canon of road-trip lit, James Morgan writes, "It's about our bone-deep need for clean breaks and fresh beginnings, for self-invention, for fleeing the numbing grind of everyday existence." Morgan had the good fortune to do his fleeing in a factory-fresh Porsche Boxster. He set out on a journey in his dream car, criss-crossing North America, much to the envy of his fellow-motorists.



Morgan was looking for the "*other* real America"—not the one found on the back roads but the one that exists just off the cloverleaf, at truck stops and motels and drive-throughs. This manner of searching is shared by Mike Bryan in **Uneasy Rider: The Interstate Way of Knowledge** (Vintage), an extended love letter to interstate travel. Amid encounters with such curiosities as dairy cows in the middle of the New Mexico desert off I-10, and the Kendrick Religious Pageant and Diorama, off I-20 near Santo, Texas, Bryan argues that "the back-roads journeys purporting to discover the real America are actually running away from the cavernous beast." The interstates themselves are the subject of **Divided Highways** (Penguin), by Tom Lewis, a history of four-lane blacktop and the enormous impact that the interstate highway system has had upon America. Along with the Great Wall of China, Lewis notes, it's "among the only human creations that can be seen by astronauts from an orbiting spacecraft."

William Least Heat-Moon was trying to dodge the interstates when he wrote **Blue Highways**, in 1982. This road-lit classic—precisely the kind of book that current chroniclers are reacting against—has recently been reissued by Mariner. Heat-Moon's America (as seen through the windshield of a beat-up van named Ghost Dancing) is a refreshingly weird mixture of terra incognita and nostalgia, where the only true answer to the question "Where you coming from?" is "Where I've been."

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN



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Chapel, Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. June 3 at 8. Tickets at the door. . . . **NOTE:** Concertgoers who arrive early, and anyone else in the surrounding neighborhood, will hear the first two New York performances of Crumb's "Easter Dawning," which Todd Fair will play on the church's carillon at 7:15 and 7:45, preceding his performance of the work in the concert itself.)

The Queen's Chamber Band—Harpsichordist Elaine Comparone and her colleagues take a detour from playing Baroque music to present the premières of pieces by Robert Baksa, Elodie Lauten, Stephen Kemp, Marshall Coid, Charles Sibirsky, Peter Susser, and Daniel Waitzman. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 3 at 8.)

Isaac Stern Chamber Music Workshop—A three-week Carnegie Hall workshop for young professional and semi-professional chamber ensembles concludes with a day of free public concerts that spotlight participants in a broad range of repertoire. (June 4 at noon, 3, and 7:30. For information about free tickets, which are required, or about attending related workshop events, call 247-7800.)

Bachmann-Klibonoff-Fridman Trio—The group offers jazz-influenced works by Copland, Ravel, Gershwin, Bernstein, Paul Schoenfield (his "Café Music," for piano trio), and Claude Bolling. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. June 5 at 7. For information about tickets, call 475-5871.)

Construction Co. String Quartet—The foursome offers a concert that includes five works by Belgian composers associated with the Ghent arts center De Rode Pomp ("The Red Pump"): Boudewijn Buckinx, Hans Cafmeyer, Lucien Posman, Paul Bruyland, and Dirk Blockeel. (The Construction Company, 10 E. 18th St. 924-7882. June 5 at 8.)

Sundays on the Island—Violinist Yosuke Kawasaki and pianist Ilan Rechtman perform Beethoven's G-Major Violin Sonata, and cellist Iris Regev joins them for Schumann's D-Minor Piano Trio. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. June 6 at noon.)

Music for Homemade Instruments—Pieces by John Bertles, Lisa Karrer, Jody Kruskal, Skip La Plante, and David Simons, employing such instruments as soda straws, balloons, fire alarms, broiler pans, cardboard-tube trombones, and Styrofoam fish crates. (Homemade's Loft, 262 Bowery, between Houston and Prince Sts. June 6 at 3. For information about tickets, call 226-1558. Children especially welcome.)

Wolfram Koessel and Ilan Rechtman—The cellist and the pianist perform sonatas by Beethoven (in A Major) and Shostakovich. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. June 6 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Narciso Figueroa—Violinist, with pianist Cullan Bryant, performing Schubert's "Rondo Brilliant" in B Minor, Brahms's Scherzo (from the "F.A.E. Sonata"), Strauss's Violin Sonata, and pieces by Sarasate and German Cáceres (a première). (Weill Recital Hall. June 8 at 8.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

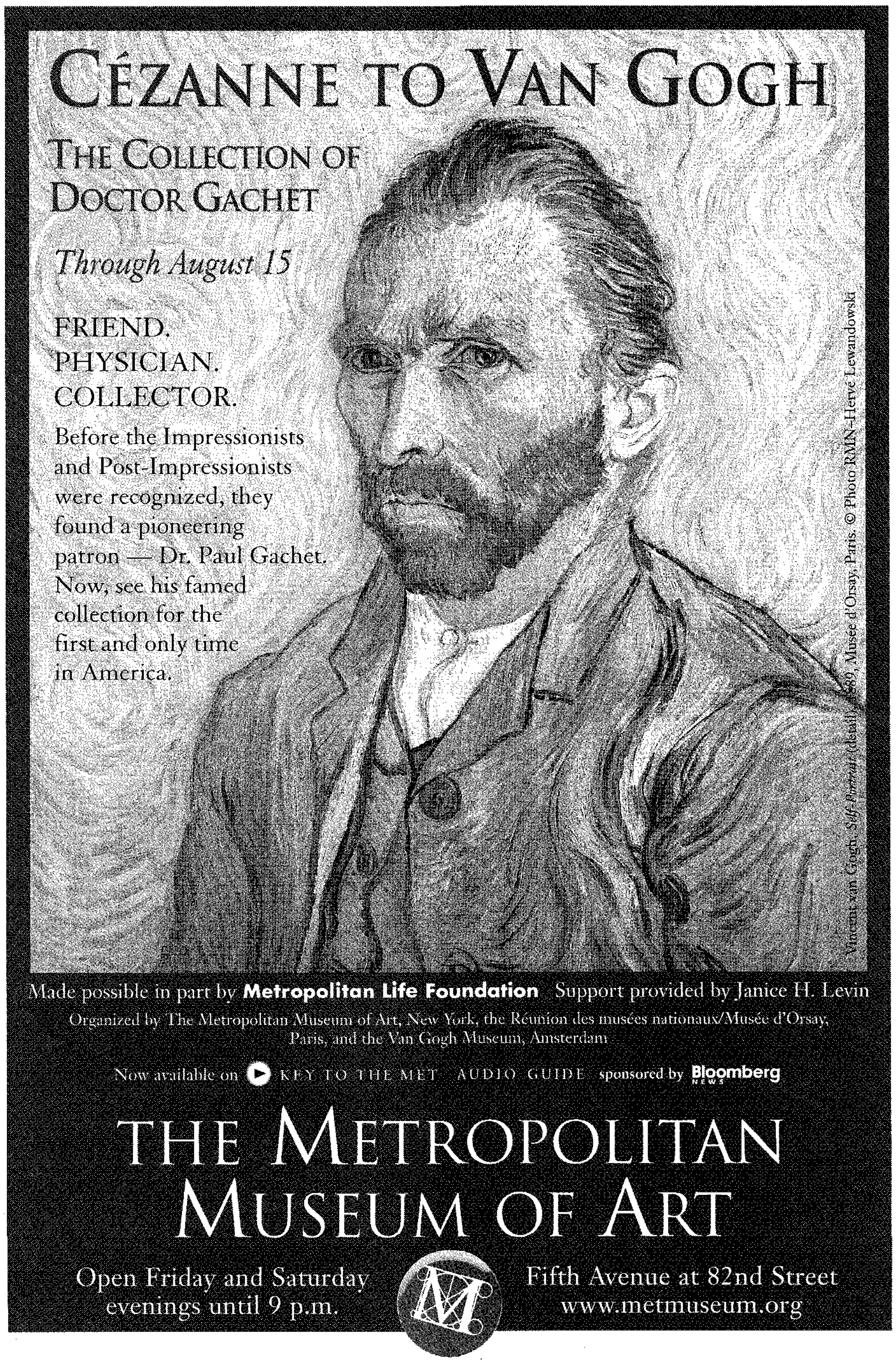
COSMOPOLITAN CHAMBER PLAYERS: A benefit concert featuring soprano Geraldine McMillian and pianist Mirian Conti. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 2 at 8.) . . . **AMERICAN COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA:** Open exploratory readings of new works by seven composers. (Masonic Hall, 71 W. 23rd St. June 4 at 10 A.M. and 1. For free reservations, which are required, call 977-8495.) . . . **SONGFELLOWS:** Performing songs relating to events in American history. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. June 5 at 3. No tickets necessary.) . . . **SALOMONE TRIO:** Medieval and Renaissance Spanish music. (Trinity Lower East Side Lutheran Parish, 602 E. 9th St. June 6 at 4. For information about tickets, call 874-6447.) . . . **ELYSIUM STRING QUARTET:** With guitarist Elena Papandreou. (Weill Recital Hall. June 7 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

New Art and Old—The Web site Turbulence describes itself as a place for "artistic work that explores the specific characteristics of the World Wide Web." Find out what that means when artists Zoe Beloff, Jesse Gilbert, Friederike Paetzold, and Neil Zusman present new work in person on June 7 at 6:30. A hint: these are works that "allow users to interact with the content, add to it, and feed the results back into the Internet site." (Harvestworks, 596 Broadway, Suite 602. For more information, call 432-0900, ext. 223, or visit www.turbulence.org.) . . . ¶ The twenty-first annual Museum Mile Festival, featuring live music, street performers, and free admission to the Metropolitan Museum, the Guggenheim Museum, the Jewish Museum, and six other institutions along Fifth Avenue, takes place June 8 from 6 to 9. For more information, call 606-2296.

Readings—June 6 at 7:30: By Celeste Olalquiaga, from her history of kitsch, "The Artificial Kingdom." (Temple Bar, 332 Lafayette St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ June 7 at 7:30: By writers Gish Jen and Susan Choi, from their recent fiction. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 399-3030.) . . . ¶ June 8 at 8: By writers David Gates, Paul LaFarge, Sylvia Brownrigg, and Amanda Davis, from their fiction. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—June 3 at 6:30: Art historian Victor Stoichita discusses Andy Warhol's "Shadow" paintings. (Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. 989-5566.) . . . ¶ June 4 at 6:30: Jack Flam, professor of art history at Brooklyn College, considers twentieth-century drawing. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008, ext. 347.) . . . ¶ June 6 at 2: Curator Peter Simmons talks about the work of the Byron Company, a photography studio that made more than 22,000 images of New York City during the early twentieth century. (Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 534-1672.)



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Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait* (detail), 1889, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. © Photo RMN–Hervé Lewandowski

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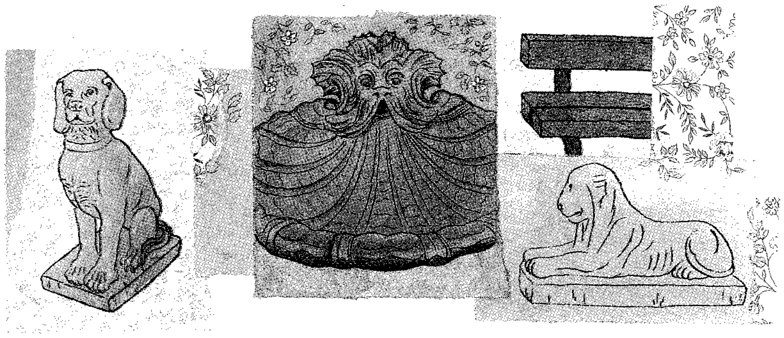

IN the world of garden ornaments and furniture, the reigning aesthetic is "old." The more signs of ravage and decay on your birdbath, the better it will look amid nature's ravages and decay in your back yard. Even places like Smith & Hawken, where the garden implements seem positively dirt-resistant, offer statuary cast in moss-inviting material and hose reels that have been treated to look rusted. But three Manhattan shops specialize in garden stuff that displays all the beauty of real weathering.

In what was once the last blacksmith's shop to service the Upper East Side, **Treillage** (418 E. 75th St.; 535-2288) offers rare antiques, whimsical accoutrements, and reproductions. The proprietors, Bunny Williams and John Rosselli, have kept the original exposed-brick walls intact, creating a grange-like space where celadon candles ($40) and a basket of straw field mice ($6 per mouse) look right at home alongside antique Portuguese oil jars ($6,000) and a Louis XV-style stone fountain ($16,000). A self-taught gardener and noted interior designer, Williams takes a relaxed approach to decorating the garden. She says that her favorite item in the store is a pair of stone spaniels ($9,000). "They're happy dogs—they look like dogs I'd like to own." Above all, she says, an ornament should make one's garden a familiar place, and bridge the gap between "the inorganic and the organic." As an example, she points out a nineteen-twenties French concrete bench ($4,000) whose seat and back are fashioned to simulate freshly cut oak planks and whose legs look just like knotty branches. Here, Williams says, "you've got a little place to sit and have your iced tea without intruding into nature."

At **Folly** (13 White St.; 925-5012), where a small selection of antique ornaments, statuary, and fountains is displayed with precise neoclassical symmetry, visitors are greeted as they might have been at a Parisian mansion in the seventeenth century—by a pair of lichen-encrusted limestone lions, reclining just inside the front door. The large showroom, with its bare wood floors, distressed walls, and trompe-l'oeil painting of a Palladian portico, provides an ideal gallery for the stone, terra-cotta, marble, and bronze relics from formal gardens past. Unsightly price tags have been banished, but manager Raúl Flores will tell you, in a soft voice tinged with a Venezuelan accent, that prices start at $3,000, for a pair of 1870 American cast-iron greyhounds—which, he suggests, might flank a fireplace or guard a set of terrace steps—and go as high as $25,000, for a small bronze fountain with a Venetian dolphin motif and an exquisite blue-green patina.

Wandering into Rebecca Cole's tiny West Village shop, **Potted Gardens** (27 Bedford St.; 255-4797), one finds an assortment of iron and wood furniture, old laundry washbasins, feeding troughs, and antique wooden toolboxes planted with pansies. Cole refers to these objects as "props" for her thriving garden-design business, and though many of them are antiques, she doesn't peddle them with the fastidiousness of a professional dealer. When asked which French vineyard was home to her nineteenth-century oak wine-tasting table ($500), she shrugs and says, "You can make one up." When Cole finds a great piece, she stockpiles; recently, she shipped home a hundred nineteenth-century English zinc washtubs ($145 each), which make perfect starter homes for cherry trees. This month, Cole is moving her wares to a new showroom, in a duplex with a garden on King Street, where she'll feature complete sets of antique garden furniture and pieces in such heretical materials as Naugahyde—a fabric that she believes "needs to be played with more," even in the garden.

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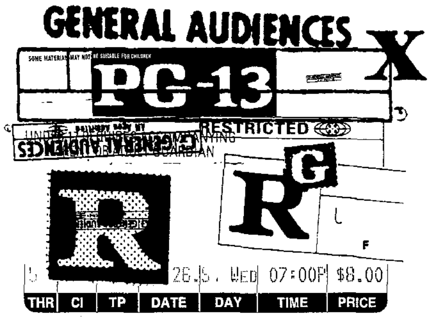


THE MOVIES

OPENING

Buena Vista Social Club—Wim Wenders's documentary follows the musician Ry Cooder to Havana, Amsterdam, and New York City. Opening June 4. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Desert Blue—Morgan J. Freeman's comedy about a group of young people quarantined in a small California town. With Brendan Sexton III, Kate Hudson, Christina Ricci, Casey Affleck, Ethan Suplee, and Sara Gilbert. Opening June 4. (Angelika Film Center.)

Finding North—A straight woman falls in love with a gay man on their road trip from New York to Texas in this comedy directed by Tanya Wexler. Opening June 4. (Quad Cinema.)

Instinct—A psychiatrist (Cuba Gooding, Jr.) investigates a murderous anthropologist and primatologist (Anthony Hopkins) in this drama directed by Jon Turteltaub. Opening June 4. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Sutton, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Union Square.)

Limbo—A story about risk-taking and relationships, written and directed by John Sayles. With David Strathairn, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Vanessa Martinez. Opening June 4.

FILM NOTES

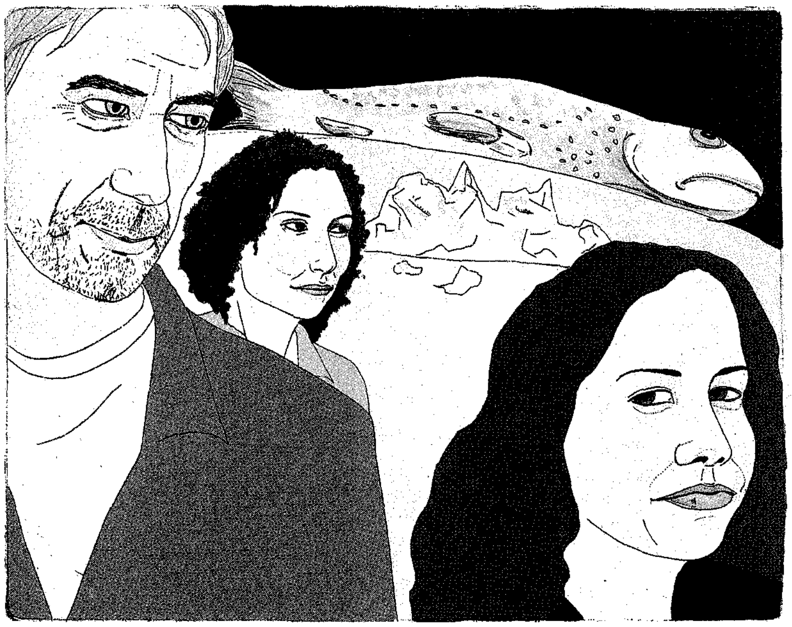
(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

After Life—Newly dead people assemble in a kind of limbo (it looks like an old school) and are asked to choose a single memory of happiness. A celestial film crew then makes a movie of that moment, and the shade is allowed to live with the memory for all eternity. In this sombre, delicate Japanese fantasy, written and directed by Kore-eda Hirokazu (a former documentary-maker), the light is gray and even, the emotions tranquil, the politeness exquisite. Hirokazu has no interest in orgiasts or roller-coaster riders: the cherished moment, it turns out, may be nothing more than a passing mood of pleasure—a breeze felt at a window—or a pleasure given rather than one received. In Japanese.—*David Denby* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Band Wagon (1953)—The Comden-Green script isn't as consistently fresh as the one they did for "Singin' in the Rain," but there have been few screen musicals as good as this one, starring those two great song-and-dance men Fred Astaire and Jack Buchanan. Actually, Buchanan's dancing and his rosy-ripe way with his lines (satirical cant about the theatuh) have such style and flourish that he steals the picture. (His role is a spoof of Orson Welles.) The plot, about a movie star (Astaire) trying for a comeback on Broadway and falling in love with a ballerina (Cyd Charisse), is a relaxed excuse for a series of urbane revue numbers, which includes "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," "That's Entertainment," "Triplets" (featuring Astaire, Buchanan, and Nanette Fabray) and culminates in the "Girl Hunt" dance sequence—a parody of Mickey Spillane's bloody boudoir fiction, with Astaire as the detective and Charisse as the good-bad women in his life. Directed by Vincente Minnelli; the choreography is by Michael Kidd; the songs are by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz.—*Pauline Kael* (American Museum of the Moving Image; June 5.)

Body and Soul (1947)—Robert Rossen had planned to film the story of welterweight boxing champ Barney Ross until Ross confessed to a drug addiction—a decency-code taboo. Rossen and his screenwriter, Abraham Polonsky, then made the hero a generic scrapper named Charley Davis, filched a climax from Hemingway's "Fifty Grand," and, with cinematographer James Wong Howe, brought off their pastiche with brio. They get the audience rooting for their impoverished Jewish fighter despite the corruption that awaits him at the top; they shape the action so that Charley can redeem himself only if he refuses to take a dive—and wins one more time. John Garfield plays Charley, and his acting freshens as the character wears out: he makes moral fatigue palpable.—*Michael Sragow* (Anthology Film Archives; June 4-6.)

Cookie's Fortune—Robert Altman, in a benevolent mood, has made a lovely ensemble comedy from Anne Rapp's original screenplay about the fate of an inheritance—the house and jewels left behind by one Cookie Orcutt (Patricia Neal), a fine old lady in a small Mississippi town who misses her dead husband so much that she refuses to spend any more time away from him. Cookie's mad nieces (Glenn Close and Julianne Moore) rearrange the evidence of Cookie's suicide so that it looks like a murder, allowing suspicion to fall on a hard-drinking but amiable black man (Charles S. Dutton) who lives in Cookie's guest house. But the movie is not the usual protest against racism; on the contrary, the town works like the kind of happy, quarrelsome extended family in which people have put up with one another's foibles for years.—*D.D.* (4/12/99) (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)



David Strathairn, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Vanessa Martinez in "Limbo."

LARA TOMLIN

The Crying Game (1992)—This amazing movie by the Irish writer and director Neil Jordan has the sure grip and the unstoppable momentum of a dream. Jordan tells the story of Fergus (Stephen Rea), a troubled I.R.A. gunman who undergoes a thorough emotional metamorphosis, and he makes the hero's change of heart moving and persuasive; the film inspires a willing suspension of something deeper and more fundamental than disbelief. It's a contemporary romantic thriller whose values are, in the best sense, medieval. Every startling twist in the plot functions as a trial for the hero; and in the end Fergus, having come through the fires of battle and through enchantments that alter the appearance of the familiar world, achieves a knightly grace. Also with Forest Whitaker, Jaye Davidson, and Miranda Richardson.—*Terrence Rafferty* (Walter Reade Theatre; June 4.)

The Dreamlife of Angels—Isa (Elodie Bouchez), a free spirit moseying around northern France with a rucksack, meets Marie (Natacha Régnier) in a clothing factory, and Marie offers her a place to stay. In a sense, Erick Zonca's first feature is little more than the brief history of their friendship; what fires it up, and takes it to the brink of greatness, is not only that the director registers every tremor of his heroines' competing emotions—the smiling blitheness of Isa, the inward fury of the beautiful Marie—but that the story travels so far. The film begins with a scuffed, documentary air that gradually deepens, almost without your noticing, into serene moments of epiphany. In French.—*Anthony Lane* (4/5/99) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

Election—To become president of the high-school student body, Tracy Flick (Reese Witherspoon) gathers signatures, bakes cupcakes, and uses everyone; she's a cross between Pat and Richard Nixon. Her fair-minded teacher, Mr. McAllister (Matthew Broderick), develops a surprising obsession with Tracy—something about her bland dynamism aggravates his boredom with his own life, and he tries to stop Tracy cold. This remarkable satirical comedy, written by Jim Taylor and directed with deadpan cool by Alexander Payne, uses the school election as a prism for an analysis of success and failure in American life.—*D.D.* (4/26 & 5/3/99) (Coronet Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Entrapment—Jon Amiel's slack and predictable caper, with Sean Connery as a master thief and the gorgeous Catherine Zeta-Jones as an insurance investigator out to bring him down. The stars lack any sort of chemistry, which is too bad, since the script, by the always unreliable Ron Bass (with William Broyles), is intended as a romantic cat-and-mouse fantasy.—*Bruce Diones* (Chelsea West, Criterion Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

eXistenZ—Once again, David Cronenberg uses a movie to play with our minds, and to make us feel disgusted about having a body. Jennifer Jason Leigh, in one of her more somnambulant moods, plays an interactive-game designer named Allegra, who is attacked while showing off her new creation, eXistenZ. From there on, she is guarded by the justifiably frightened Ted (Jude Law), whom she shyly introduces to the delights of her game. It doesn't look like a best-seller; once you're plugged in, all you appear to do is hang around in a game store and get your hands covered in blood at a virtual fish farm. Cronenberg is so busy plying his in-jokes and drilling his psychosexual meanings into the viewer's brain, or whatever organ takes his fancy, that he somehow neglects to tell a decent, entertaining story.—*A.L.* (5/10/99) (Cinema 3rd Avenue and Village East Cinemas.)

Go—A crowded new movie from Doug Liman, who made the indie hit "Swingers." This time he has chosen to tell three overlapping stories, all of them starting from the same point: Christmas Eve on the seedy side of Los Angeles. First, a checkout clerk (Sarah Polley) attempts to turn drug dealer, with limited success; second, an English friend of hers (Desmond Askew) pays an incendiary visit to Las Vegas; third, a couple of soap actors are forced to lend their services to a narcotics sting. Liman's structure feels complicated rather than fruitfully complex, and the picture works best as a scattering of light comic observations.—*A.L.* (4/19/99) (84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, The Screening Room, 64th and 2nd, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Loss of Sexual Innocence—The new Mike Figgis film, his first feature since the glossy "One Night Stand," marks one of his irregular forays into dreamy experiment. In a loose way, it tells the story of Nic; we see him as a young boy in Africa, as an older boy back in England, as a sexually thwarted teen-ager (played by Jonathan Rhys-Meyers), and then as an adult (Julian Sands) who leaves his family and travels back to the desert. These fragmentary episodes are spliced with the story of Adam and Eve: a black man and a white woman rise naked from a lake and take it from there; in a bold departure, the role of the fateful apple is played by figs. These sequences badly skew the film—not because of explicitness but because their import is so obvious that it flattens the other narratives. There is much that is infuriating and pretentious here, but you can forgive Figgis almost anything, because his ambition allows him to stumble upon sights that no other director could envisage; the cheap, granular quality of the picture, with its hot, earthy colors, gets under your skin, and there is one section, entitled "Twins," that is the most haunting thing he has ever done. Two adult sisters who were separated at birth (both played wonderfully by Saffron Burrows) pass each other at an airport. The heartache of their near-miss needs a whole movie to itself.—*A.L.* (Angelika Film Center.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—Kevin Kline does his best movie work yet as Nick Bottom, the weaver and amateur actor, who gets "translated" into an ass and then enjoys the infatuated caresses of Titania (Michelle Pfeiffer), the deluded queen of the fairies. Chest hair aroused, donkey teeth protruding, Kline luxuriates gloriously in Pfeiffer's arms. But in most other ways this "Midsummer Night" is hard to endure. Director Michael Hoffman has transferred the setting from Shakespeare's ancient, myth-haunted Athens to the Tuscany of 1900; the production is sunshiny, lavish, and busy, but to no particular purpose, and the Italian opera that Hoffman pours on is too openly emotional for the play's delicate madness.—*D.D.* (5/17/99) (East 85th Street, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 34th Street Showplace, and Union Square.)

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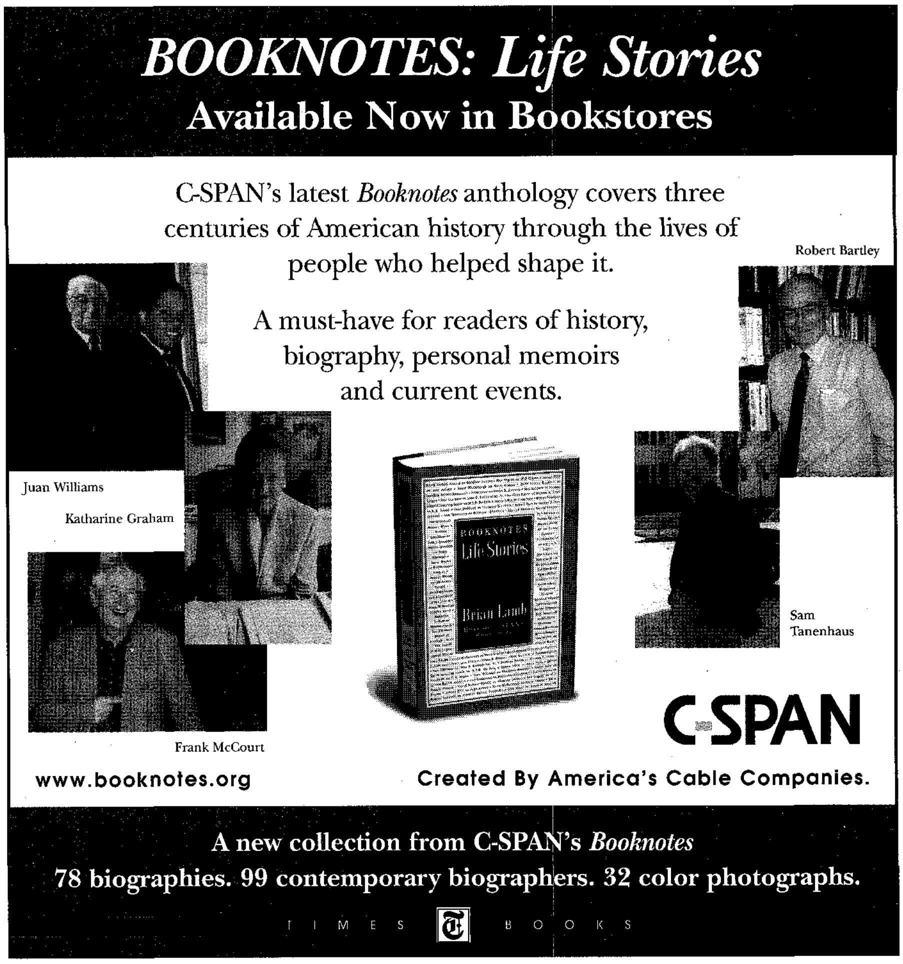

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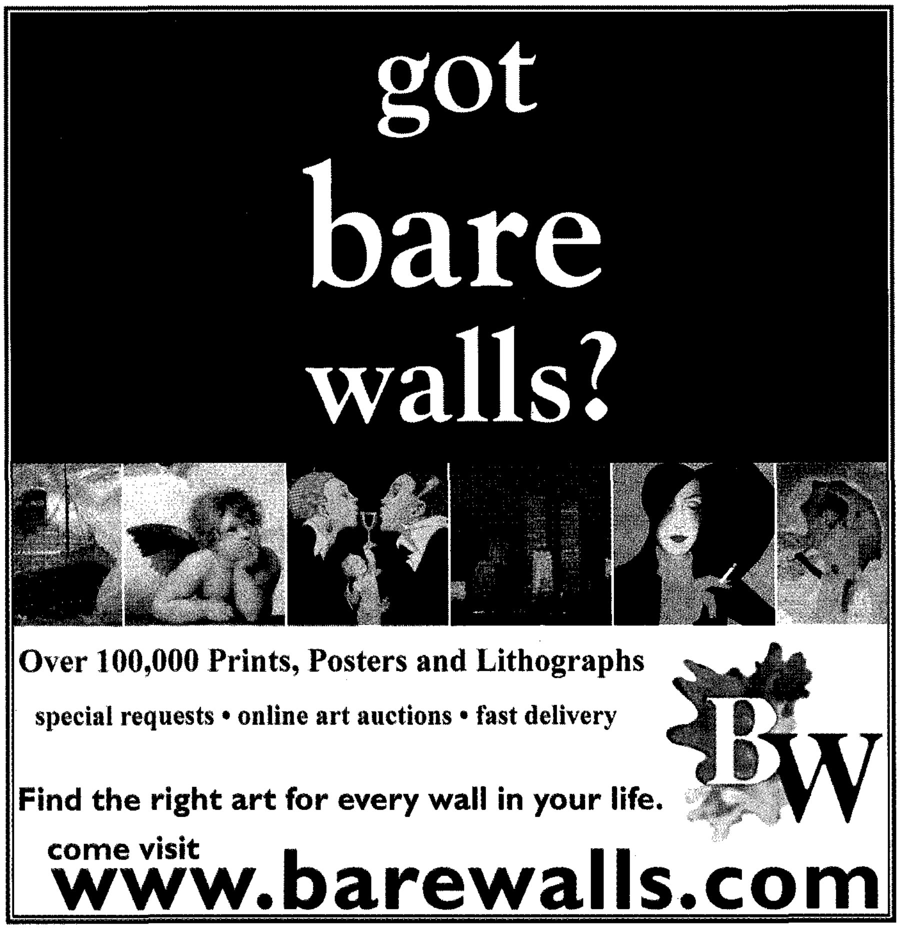

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The Mummy—In the nineteen-twenties, in a fabled city in the sands of Egypt, in a hidden tomb, a beefy American adventurer named O'Connell (Brendan Fraser) goes looking for buried treasure. With him are a studious but sultry librarian (Rachel Weisz) and her dim but cowardly brother (John Hannah). We already know that the tomb is booby-trapped by all manner of ancient curses, and, soon enough, the massed ranks of special effects arrive to take revenge. Stephen Sommers's movie has the courage of its own clichés; he piles the silliness on with such speed that you don't have the time to notice how dead and dusty most of his themes are. Fraser, however, successfully demonstrates how to be lusty and affable at the same time.—*A.L.* (5/10/99) (Astor Plaza, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly.)

Notting Hill—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Cinemas, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace—It has been more than twenty years since George Lucas directed a movie. Amid the fuss that has attended his return to the fray, no one seems to have wondered whether he was up to the task. With this

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THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

film, Lucas demonstrates two facts: one, that he has kept abreast of the recent leaps in special effects, and two, that he hasn't a clue what to do with all the nondigital figures, otherwise known as "people." The movie is the first of three prequels to the original "Star Wars" trilogy, the intention being to explain everything that happened in that slightly dreary galaxy before Harrison Ford turned up. In this opening installment, the clash is between the Federation, which wants to take over the planet Naboo and build condos, and the local residents, who kick up a stink with a little help from the Jedi. Halfway through we meet Anakin Skywalker (Jake Lloyd)—savior of the galaxy, or, from another point of view, a precocious little creep. Three fine actors were lured into this farrago: Ewan McGregor plays the young Obi-Wan Kenobi, Liam Neeson is his Jedi mentor, Natalie Portman plays a teen-age queen, and all of them look as if they were recently abused by robots. Everyone on planet Earth is being encouraged to see this movie; why don't we follow the good citizens of Naboo and mount a spirited resistance?—*A.L.* (5/24/99) (East 86th Street Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

The Winslow Boy—Before the First World War, an English naval cadet, accused of forging and cashing a five-shilling postal order, is expelled from school. His father (Nigel Hawthorne) believes him innocent and empties the family coffers in an attempt to clear the boy's name. David Mamet has adapted and directed Terence Rattigan's 1946 play, which was based on a true story, with a fidelity so profound that one doesn't know whether to be amazed or depressed by it. The movie concentrates on the intense self-control of the boy's upper-middle-class family. Every scene is a tense struggle between anger and reticence, between love and self-suppression, and after a while the entire enterprise seems slightly mad. Is British reserve really such a superb moral achievement? With Rebecca Pidgeon and Jeremy Northam.—*D.D.* (5/17/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl—The actor Joan Chen's directorial début is set during the grim period of rustication, in the nineteen-sixties, when millions of urban Chinese teen-agers were taken from their families and sent to work in the countryside. The virginal, stuck-up heroine, Xiu Xiu (Lu Lu), ends up in a deserted corner of western China sharing a tent with Lao Jin (Lopsang), a Tibetan horse herder. He's kind and manly, but because of some rotten luck twenty years ago he's not fully a man; meanwhile, in her desperation to get back home, Xiu Xiu begins to offer her body to local officials. The haunted landscape and the two natural leads bring the story to life; what starts out as a light coming-of-age tale hurtles toward its climax like a tragic opera. In Mandarin.—*Sarah Kerr* (Eastside Playhouse, Metro Cinema, and Village East Cinemas.)

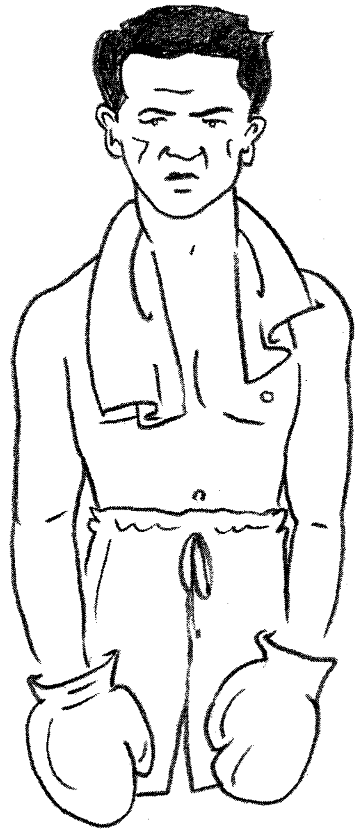
ALSO PLAYING

AMERICAN HOLLOW: Film Forum. . . . **ANALYZE THIS:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **BESIEGED:** Angelika Film Center and Paris. . . . **BLACK MASK:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **THE CASTLE:** Cinema II and Village East Cinemas. . . . **EDGE OF SEVENTEEN:** Quad Cinema. . . . **ETERNITY AND A DAY:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **GET REAL:** Angelika Film Center and 19th Street East 6. . . . **HIDEOUS KINKY:** Art Greenwich Twin and 34th Street Showplace. . . . **THE KING OF MASKS:** Cinema Village. . . . **LEILA:** Cinema Village. . . . **LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL** (reviewed in our issues of 11/16/98 and 3/15/99): East 86th Street Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, Guild, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **THE LOVE LETTER:** BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **THE MATRIX** (4/26 & 5/3/99): Chelsea Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, State, and Union Square. . . . **OPEN YOUR EYES:** Cinema Village. . . . **SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE** (12/21/98): 84th Street Sixplex, Sutton, and Waverly. . . . **TEA WITH MUSSOLINI:** Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Square. . . . **THE THIRD MAN** (1949): Film Forum. . . . **THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **THIS IS MY FATHER:** First & 62nd Cinemas and 19th Street East 6. . . . **THREE SEASONS:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **TRIPPIN':** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, and Orpheum VII. . . . **TWICE UPON A YESTERDAY:** BAM Rose Cinemas, Cinema I, and Union Square. . . . **A WALK ON THE MOON** (4/12/99): Art Greenwich Twin, East 86th Street Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Films directed by François Truffaut; in French, with English subtitles. June 2: "Two English Girls" (1974). . . . June 3: "Confidentially Yours" (1983). . . . June 4: "The Woman Next Door" (1981). . . . June 5-6: "Bed and Board" (1970). . . . June 8: "Mississippi Mermaid" (1969). . . . ¶ Two films by Harold Lloyd. June 7: "Grandma's Boy" (1922) and "The Cat's Paw" (1934).



John Garfield in "Body and Soul."

FABIO MORELLI GOMES

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films directed by Alfred Hitchcock. June 3 at 2:30: "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (1955). . . . June 3 at 6: "The Wrong Man" (1956). . . . June 4 at 2:30: "Vertigo" (1957). . . . June 4 at 6 and June 6 at 2: "Psycho" (1960). . . . June 4 at 8:30 and June 5 at 2: "North by Northwest" (1959). . . . June 5 at 5: "To Catch a Thief" (1954). . . . June 6 at 5 and June 7 at 2:30: "The Birds" (1963). . . . ¶ June 4 at 3 and June 5 at 5: "Germany, Awake!" (1968, Erwin Leiser), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 4 at 7 and June 6 at 2:30: "An Anthology of the Italian Cinema: The Silent Film from 1896 to 1926" (1955), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 5 at 2:30 and June 6 at 5:15: "Camera d'Afrique: 20 Years of African Cinema" (1983, Ferid Boughedir), a documentary.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of Irish films. June 2 at 1, 4:40, and 8:15: "Crush Proof" (1998, Paul Tickell). . . . June 2 at 2:50 and 6:30: "Nothing Personal" (1995, Thaddeus O'Sullivan). . . . June 3 at 1: "The Last Bus Home" (1997, Johnny Gogan). . . . June 3 at 3: "Gold in the Streets" (1997, Elizabeth Gill). . . . June 4 at 1 and 5:50: "The Crying Game" (†). . . . June 4 at 3:15 and 8: "Michael Collins" (1996, Neil Jordan). . . . June 5 at 4:30 and 8:45: "Angel" (1982, Jordan). . . . June 5 at 6:30 and June 6 at 9:30: "The Miracle" (1991, Jordan). . . . June 6 at 4:30 and June 7 at 3:50 and 8:30: "The Company of Wolves" (1984, Jordan). . . . June 6 at 6:30 and June 7 at 1 and 5:45: "The Butcher Boy" (1998, Jordan). . . . June 8 at 1, 4:45, and 8:50: "The Uncle Jack" (1996, John T. Davis). . . . June 8 at 2:40 and 6:45: "Frankie Starlight" (1996, Michael Lindsay-Hogg). . . . ¶ June 3 at 7:30: "Melvin and Howard" (1980, Jonathan Demme).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of Fred Astaire films. June 5 at 2: "The Band Wagon" (†). . . . June 5 at 4:30: "Three Little Words" (1950, Richard Thorpe). . . . June 6 at 2: "Silk Stockings" (1957, Rouben Mamoulian). . . . June 6 at 4:30: "Finian's Rainbow" (1968, Francis Ford Coppola).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—June 3-4 at 6 and June 5-6 at 2: Alfred Hitchcock's television work, featuring "Tactic" (1959) and "The Jail" (1962).

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—A program of films featuring Marcello Mastroianni. June 8 at 7: "Leo the Last" (1970, John Boorman). . . . June 8 at 9: "Sostiene Pereira" (1995, Roberto Faenza; in Italian).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—June 8 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Full Speed" (1996, Gaël Morel; in French).

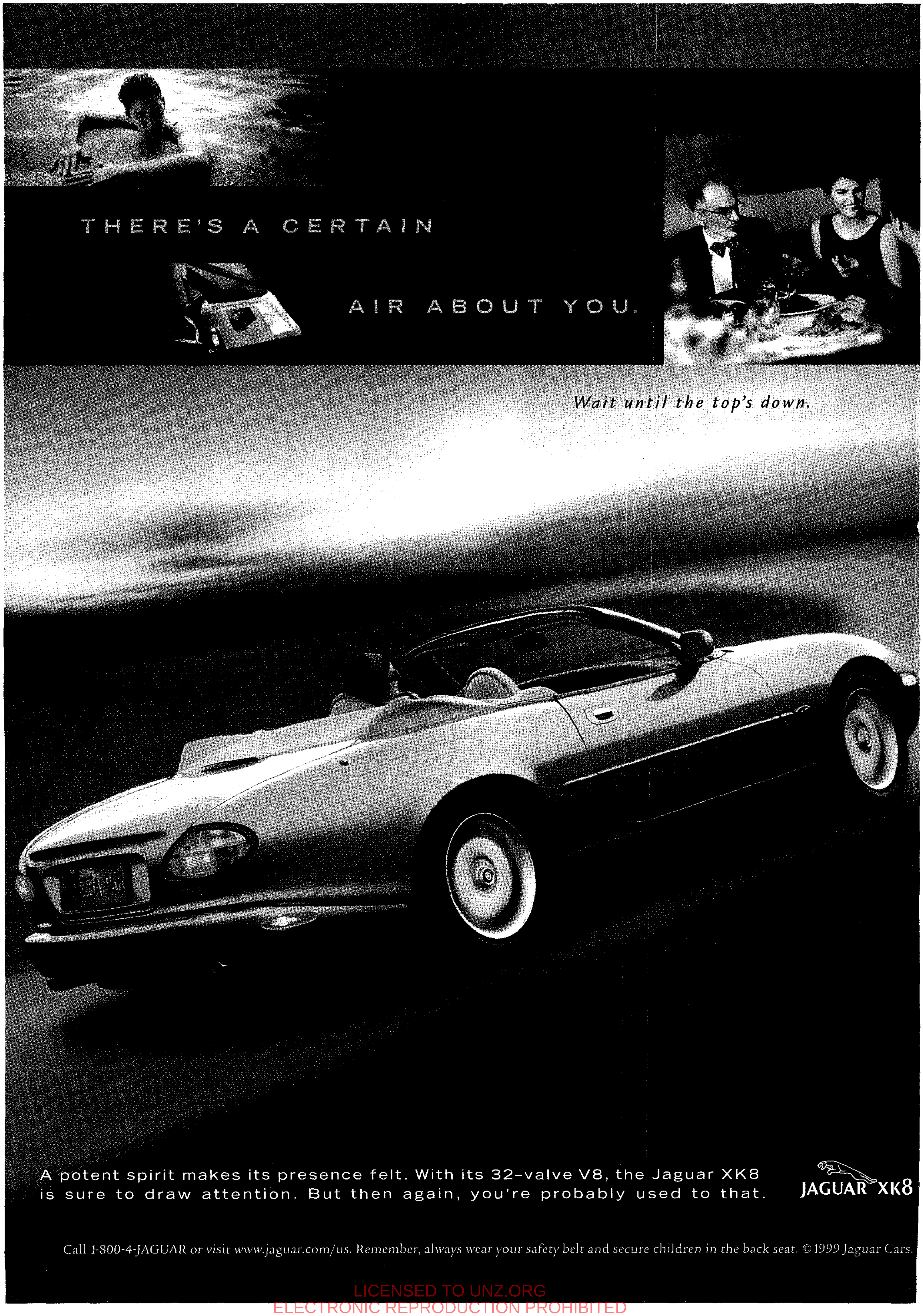
A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On June 6 at 7, the feature will be "Can't Stop the Music" (1980, Nancy Walker).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—June 3 at 7 and 9 and June 5 at 2: "Salt of the Earth" (1954, Herbert Biberman). . . . June 3 at 9, June 5 at 10, and June 6 at 4: "Seconds" (1966, John Frankenheimer). . . . June 4 at 6 and 8, June 5 at 3 and 5:30, and June 6 at 2, 6, and 10: "Flamenco Women" (1997) and "Just Dancing Around" (1995), both directed by Mike Figgis. . . . June 4 at 7, June 5 at 4, and June 6 at 9: "Body and Soul" (†). . . . June 4 at 9:30, June 5 at 6:15, and June 6 at 7: "Force of Evil" (1948, Abraham Polonsky). . . . June 5 at 8 and June 6 at 2: "The Front" (1976, Martin Ritt).

The 11th Annual New York Lesbian and Gay Film Festival—Starting June 3: Full-length features and documentaries and short films will be shown at the New School (66 W. 12th St.), at Cinema Village (22 E. 12th St.), at the N.Y.U. Cantor Film Center (36 E. 8th St.), and at the Brooklyn Museum of Art (200 Eastern Parkway). (For information about schedules and films, call 254-8504.)

BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—June 4 and June 7-10: "In the Presence of a Clown" (1997, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish) and "Wild Strawberries" (1957, Bergman; in Swedish). . . . June 5-6: "In the Presence of a Clown," "Wild Strawberries," and "The Phantom Carriage" (1921, Victor Sjöström; silent).

The Second Annual New York International Documentary Festival—June 3-6: Sixteen films and videos. (Directors Guild of America Theatre, 110 W. 57th St. For information about schedules and films, call 668-1575.)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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

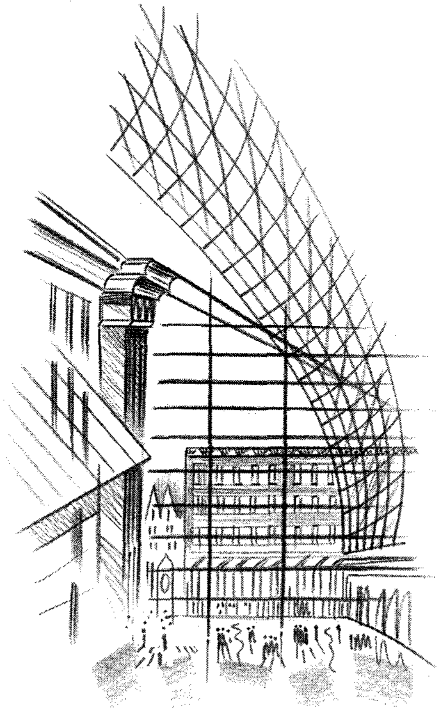
COMMENT

A second chance for Penn Station.

THE original Pennsylvania Station, the grandest train station ever built in the United States, was torn down in 1963, not only because it was a financial drain on a failing railroad but—strangely—because it was perceived as having no symbolic value. Much has changed since the building was carted off to the dump. For one thing, its demolition led to the passage of landmarks laws in New York City, and a concomitant shift in public consciousness. Charles McKim's masterwork died that others might live.

A cultivated respect for public buildings that aspire to grandeur is behind the plan to spend four hundred and eighty-four million dollars to build a "new" Pennsylvania Station across the street from where the old one stood, and where the excruciatingly banal Madison Square Garden and a pair of mediocre office buildings now stand. Horrendous architectural mistakes are usually irreversible in New York. We have learned to live with the World Trade Center and the former Pan Am Building and the various pieces of Trump-inspired glitz because, well, we have no choice. This time, though, there is a chance to fix the very place that was broken. The new Penn Station will occupy most of the James A. Farley Building, the huge United States post office that was built by McKim, Mead & White in 1913. The post office was intended as a companion piece to the station: it has a classical colonnade—less grand than the station's was, but every bit as welcoming—and it sits over the same railroad tracks. The plan is to let the postal service continue to use the main hall, on the Eighth Avenue front, and some interior space. The rest of the building will be turned into what planners now like to call an "intermodal transportation facility."

David Childs, of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, has designed something so good they can call it whatever they want. His plan is the finest public project in New York since Battery Park City, although it is going to be a terrible disappointment to people who thought we were in for a reconstruction of the original Pennsylvania Station. Childs's design bears about as much resemblance to McKim's monument as Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao does to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. But it is nearly as brilliant as Bilbao, and it will be right in the center of New York, which for most of the last twenty years has been the city that architecture forgot.



The plan takes advantage of the fact that the post office is actually two buildings—the original eastern section, along Eighth Avenue, and a later addition, roughly similar in size and general design, that was put up in 1935 to extend the structure all the way to Ninth Avenue. In between the two sections is a large open area that is hidden by a façade. Childs has made this formerly wasted space, which was used as a truck-loading dock, into the center of the new station. He removed the false front and put a high, curving roof of metal and glass over the space, which will serve as the station's ticketing hall, main public concourse, and architectural symbol. The roof, which is a section of a sphere, will rise a hundred and fifty feet—precisely the height of the central waiting room in the original building. McKim's station, of course, had two great public spaces—the waiting room, modelled on the Baths of Caracalla, and the vaulted steel-and-glass train concourse. What Childs has done in his ticketing hall is, in a sense, to join the scale and placement of the original Pennsylvania Station waiting room with the industrial tradition that brought forth the train concourse. And he has done it in a way that uses the complex geometries of the end of the twentieth century.

Sometimes playing around with buildings that are merely good—like the Farley Building—can make them better. To refuse to do that, to design new things only to make them look old, is archeology, not architecture. The buildings that have grabbed the world's attention recently—not just Bilbao but Sir Norman Foster's reconstruction of the Reichstag, in Berlin, where a new glass dome has been placed atop a nineteenth-century stone structure;

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT RISKO

Nicholas Grimshaw's voluptuously curving, glass-enclosed addition to Waterloo Station, in London; and Santiago Calatrava's exquisitely lyrical bridges and atriums—were designed by architects who weren't afraid to juxtapose the sleekest glass forms they could conceive with the most stolid masonry buildings of the past. When everything works right, such juxtapositions can produce architecture of great intensity, which exploits space and materials and technology to create a vibrant dialogue between past and present. Childs's soaring glass ticketing hall will be that kind of architecture. His design is truer to the spirit of Beaux-Arts classicism than an imitation classical building would be. If it gets built, it will remind us that all those classical columns and pediments and moldings weren't what made the finest of our old public spaces work—it was architectural ideas.

—PAUL GOLDBERGER

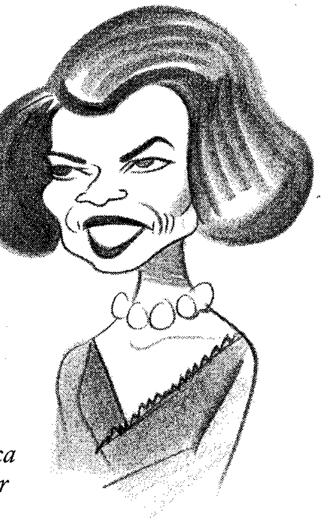
THE POLITICAL LIFE

Bianca Jagger lobbies her black book.

IT has been two decades since Bianca Jagger divorced her rock-and-roll spouse and began travelling around the world in the service of human rights. Yet she seems to be the Rodney Dangerfield of philanthropists—a glamorous, well-meaning woman who never seems to get enough respect. Last month, for example, Jagger appeared on the public-affairs show "Crossfire" to argue for sending NATO ground troops to Kosovo. Afterward, Tucker Carlson, who was the program's conservative co-host that night, said that throughout the segment he had been "very distracted by the effort it took me not to ask her about Mick."

Jagger has very little patience for this kind of attitude. Reached in London, where she lives when she's not on a humanitarian mission, she said, "I'm on the board of very important organizations. I think I've paid my dues. I've earned my respect regardless of whether I was married to Mick Jagger or the cleaner in the street!"

Being a well-known social figure, however, does provide some advantages for a human-rights activist. Since the onset of the NATO bombing raids in Kosovo, Jagger, a strong supporter of military action against Slobodan Milosevic, has had no trouble lobbying two U.S. senators—Christopher Dodd, of Connecticut, and Robert Torricelli, of New Jersey—who both happen to be former boyfriends. A spokeswoman for Dodd confirmed that Jagger and the Senator have spoken recently, but she added, "The Senator does not discuss personal calls." Jagger also arranged for two Kosovo refugees to meet with Torricelli, who has been notably unsympathetic toward the United States' role in the Balkans.



Bianca Jagger

Jagger is good at attracting attention for her causes. An American reporter posted in Macedonia says that when Jagger came through on a nine-day tour of the refugee camps "notices of her itinerary were taped to the front counter and in the elevator" of a local hotel where many journalists were staying. The problem, the reporter says, is that although Jagger is well intentioned, she is not always well informed. "She takes rumors of atrocities," he said, including a recent rumor of Serbian troops using poison gas, "and declares them as facts," pressing reporters to write them into their stories.

Among members of the human-rights community, Jagger's role is somewhat controversial. "Some think it's good to have her celebrity," Bill Stuebner, an adviser on reconciliation at the U.S. Institute of Peace, says. "Others feel that when she does something incorrect it makes matters worse." John Heffernan, the executive director of the Coalition for International Justice, on whose advisory board Jagger sits, describes her as a great help. "She's committed. She believes in what she's doing. And she doesn't need to be doing any of it," he said the other day. "She's willing to go into the trenches, and not just pontificate here in Washington and New York."

Jagger, who has been pushing for the indictment of Milosevic for years, has particular contempt for what she calls Clinton's "lack of leadership and resolve," and for former Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who she says "treated Milosevic as an important tool in their game," rather than as a war criminal.

Even "Crossfire" 's Carlson admitted that he finds Jagger's "hawkishness" impressive. He had prepared an especially tricky question for her, involving the particulars of Montenegrin geography. But after a few minutes of dialogue he decided not to ask the question. "I was afraid that she might know the answer," he said.

—JANE MAYER

DEPT. OF HOOPLA

Hillary Clinton studies the moves of a consummate New Yorker.

IT isn't often that the First Lady of New York and the uppity young contender for that position meet on the same dais, but it happened last week at Lincoln Center, when the arts advocacy group Americans for the Arts held its annual awards gala. The current titleholder, Brooke Astor, a sprightly flyweight going on ninety-seven, got there early, trading verbal jabs with people like Isaac Stern, the violinist and conductor, and Veronica Hearst, the publishing executive, who organized the evening. The challenger, Hillary Rodham Clinton, a clever shadowboxer who hails from Illinois, was late. She had been on

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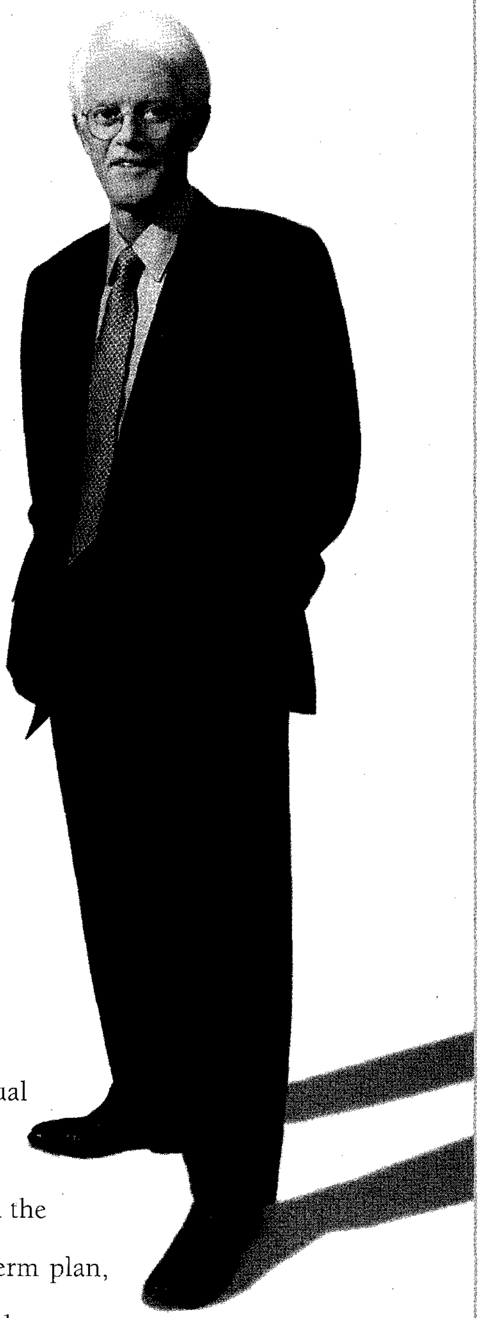

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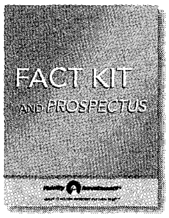

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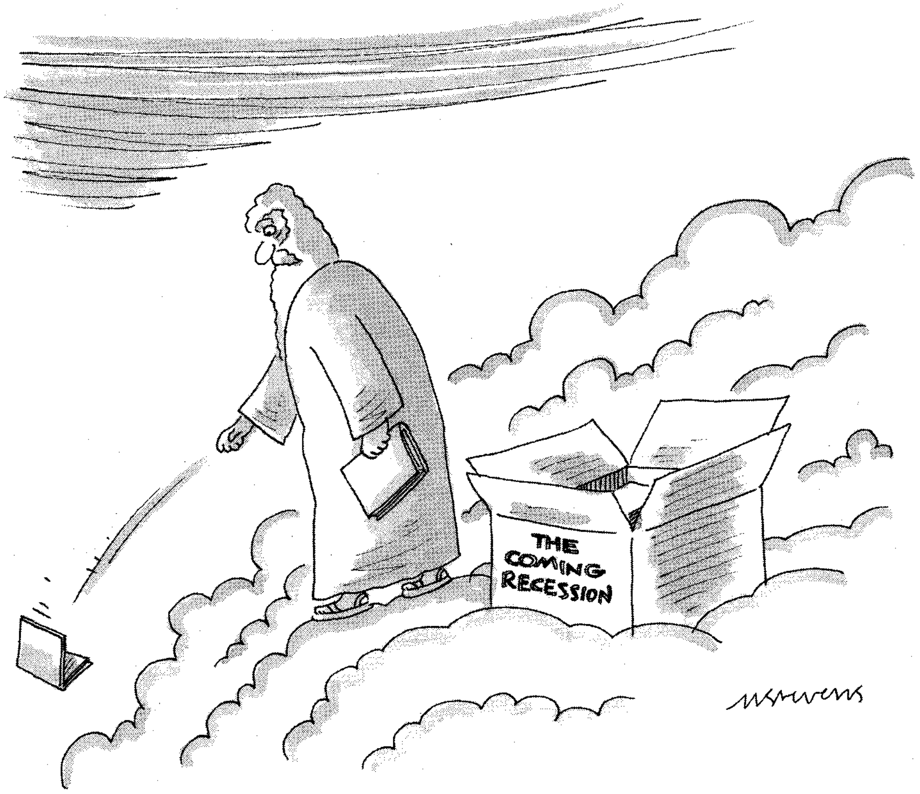


the other side of town, at a political fund-raiser for the Westchester congresswoman Nita Lowey, who will contend for Daniel Patrick Moynihan's Senate seat next year if Mrs. Clinton decides not to run after all.

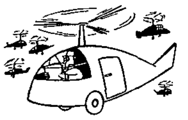
When Mrs. Clinton finally arrived, she was presented with an award for her support of the arts by Caroline Kennedy. Mrs. Clinton told the crowd that she was "just delighted" to receive an award from Caroline Kennedy, whom, she added intriguingly, "I feel very close to for a number of reasons." Then she delivered an earnest speech about the importance of the arts.

In truth, though, Mrs. Clinton was no match for Mrs. Astor, a hardy dowager who has honed her technique at thousands of such occasions. Clambering onto the stage, she held the audience rapt as she told of her thirty-nine years as head of the Astor Foundation—a period during which the foundation distributed two hundred million dollars to causes that ranged from the public-library system and the Metropolitan Museum to low-income housing in Queens. "I've given it all to New York, and I've never given anything to anything I haven't seen," she declared, in her plummy English accent, the likes of which is rarely heard outside Buckingham Palace these days. Then she passed along some invaluable advice to anybody with the wallet and the wherewithal to take up her role: "When I went to places, I always dressed up. If I didn't wear jewelry, I wore something nice. Maybe just a pin. People like to see you looking nice, no matter how poor they are."

When it was all over, the well-tended mob dispersed into the rainy night. For Mrs. Clinton, another fund-raiser beckoned, this one on the Upper West Side. For Mrs. Astor, an equally pressing engagement was at hand. She had to go home and see her schnauzer, Maisie, and her two dachshunds, Boysie and Girlsie. —JOHN CASSIDY

DEPT. OF NAMESAKES

What do Army aircraft and Native Americans have in common?



EVEN though the Army's Boeing AH-64A Apache helicopters haven't entered combat yet, there's been a buzz surrounding them ever since early April, when President Clinton ordered a battalion of them to Albania. Between appraisals of the twelve-and-a-half-million-dollar craft's killing power (a Boeing fact sheet describes its "sixteen laser-guided precision Hellfire missiles, seventy-six 70mm rockets . . . and a 30mm automatic cannon") and inquiries into the May 5th crash that killed two Army pilots, Apaches haven't been in the news this much since the nineteenth century, when the various Southwestern Indian tribes now referred to by that name were systematically destroyed or displaced by the United States military. An anti-ethnic-cleansing device named for a people who were ethnically cleansed—and by the same organization, no less? It's an irony so broad that even Alanis Morissette could spot it.

The Apache isn't the only Army helicopter with an Indian name. There's the Chinook, the Black Hawk, and the Kiowa, to name a few. And it certainly isn't the first high-profile appropriation of Native American identity, which has furnished brand names for automobiles, clothes, shoes, and, most flagrantly, sports teams. For years now, real Indians have been losing patience with the fake ones. In April, the Washington Redskins franchise was stripped of exclusive rights to its name and logo, and similar suits are planned against the Cleveland Indians, the Atlanta Braves, and the Florida State Seminoles, among other teams.

Vernon Bellecourt, the president of the National Coalition on Racism in Sports and Media, has played a major role in these denominational challenges. Bellecourt, a sixty-seven-year-old member of the White Earth Ojibwa nation, has, since 1992, doggedly pursued any and all sports teams that insist on using—he would say exploiting—Indian names. He has led many protests, several of them in Cleveland, where he has been arrested twice while burning the Indians' mascot, Chief Wahoo, in effigy.

Bellecourt has already begun to carp about the choppers. "The name is used in a generic way, and it creates this impression that all we did was go around fighting," he says. "Black Hawk was a great leader, a man of peace. He was a victim of the most horrendous ethnic cleansing. To reduce this great leader to a gunship or a hockey team is absolutely outrageous."

Outrageous, perhaps, but time-honored. According to Nancy Ray, an

Army public-affairs officer, the custom dates back to the 1946 Bell H-13 Sioux helicopter. In fact, there's an obscure Army regulation governing the practice. It's in the "Procedures" section of Appendix XII—also known as "Assigning Popular Names"—of DA Pamphlet 70-3, which stipulates that Army aircraft be named after "Indian terms and names of American Indian tribes and chiefs" to highlight the "mobility, agility, flexibility, firepower, and endurance" of the equipment.

Ray, who says that she is familiar with the sports-mascot flap, feels that the Army practice is quite different. "These aren't derogatory terms like 'Wop' or 'kike.' These are tribe names, and were designed to honor the Native Americans for the kind of tribes they were."

Coincidentally, Boeing maintains a facility in Mesa, Arizona, right in the heart of Apache country. "The Apache tribe out here does not seem to feel that it is at all degrading," Ken Jensen, a Boeing communications manager, says. And when Boeing recently presented the second-generation AH-64D Apache Longbow to its British buyers the tribal council turned out in support. "They came out for the ceremony, blessed the helicopter, sang songs, and presented a bow and arrow to the British," Hal Klopper, another Mesa-based Boeing spokesperson, said.

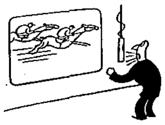
Is this a case where the activists are more upset at perceived slights than the acted-upon? Even Bellecourt concedes the complexity of the issue. "A lot of the Apaches are veterans who take great pride in their fighting spirit and their military service," he said. "Still, if America wanted to honor Indians, it should have honored us two or three hundred years ago, before perpetuating this ethnic cleansing in the form of a massive genocide."

DA Pamphlet 70-3 is unlikely to pass into obscurity anytime soon. Still, there's always the chance that the rules of the name game will change. And what will happen to the Army helicopters then? Hayes Roth has some idea. Roth is the senior executive director at Landor Associates, which is one of the world's premier branding and design consultancies and is responsible for creating brands such as Touchstone and Lucent. "If it's a renaming, we would look not only at the product features but at the essence of the brand," Roth said. "From what I've heard, this helicopter is the equivalent of a highly mobile battleship and is extremely nimble. So we would think of what kinds of names communicate that nimble power. For example, 'Wasp' might be a good name." Wasps? Now, there's a fiercely protective tribe.

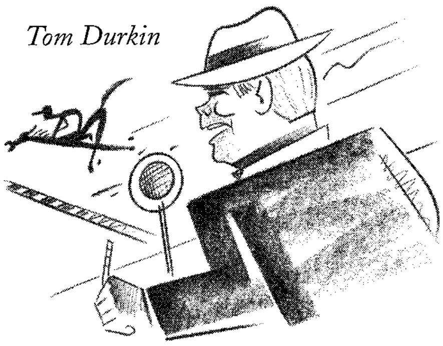
—Ben Greenman

THE SPORTING LIFE

A different kind of horse whisperer at Belmont.



Tom Durkin is, above all, a word man. On the one hand, there are the words he wants to forget: "Talledega Sprint," "Claromatic," "Not Exactly Monday," "New York Ghazette," "Joey's Lauren," "Red Tees," "Lolly Go Litely," and "Binoculars." On the other hand, there are the words he wants to remember: "brisk," "lively," "crisp," "snappy," "rapid," "hot," "searing," "frantic," "vicious," "demanding," "excruciating," "gruelling," and "impossible." The words he wants to forget are the names of fillies and mares that just finished running in the fifth race at Aqueduct on a recent afternoon. The words he wants to remember are descriptors he might use in the sixth race for the pace the horses maintain, especially in the first two quarter-mile splits.



Tom Durkin

Tom Durkin spends his days calling races at Aqueduct, Belmont Park, and Saratoga, among other racetracks. Nine or ten races a day is between seventy and a hundred horse names to remember and then forget. In a bubblelike crow's nest up above the finish line, Durkin, with two pairs of binoculars and a microphone at the ready, picks up the race program. Starting with Wallimar, he uses colored pens to annotate the entry for each horse with small, mnemonic symbols while reciting the horses' names over and over. He doodles a red block with a blue triangle—the rider of the No. 2 horse is wearing bright-red-and-blue silks. He fits the name of the No. 2 horse, Gebb's Prince, into his chant, and continues on down the page—yellow, blue crosshatching, green circles, yellow with red stripes.

This takes less than a minute. Then he picks up binoculars and follows the horses around to the gate, connecting names with actual horses and riders, chanting for thirty seconds. He pauses to report to the crowd of racing fans below: "Post time in five minutes." As the horses enter the starting gate, he chants their names for twenty seconds more, then says, "The horses are in the gate," then, "And they're off!"

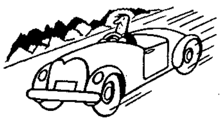
Verbs come into play: Gebb's Prince angles to the rail, Wallimar is taken back, three vie for the early lead, Battle of Saratoga gets hung up, Wallimar is reined in, and the opening quarter is "poky." Wallimar makes steady gains, Judges Dream goes under the whip, Gebb's Prince is driving to him. At the eighth pole, Gebb's Prince collars Judges Dream, and Judges Dream tries to battle back, but his jockey loses the whip. It is a photo finish, decided in favor of Gebb's Prince. The pace was slow, but not "pedestrian" or "glacial," two adjectives that Durkin has had the privilege of using from time to time. Up in the booth, he marvels at the chaos of the finish. And that is that. The race is official, and in half an hour there will be a new story, new characters, new verbs, new adjectives. With luck, and as a result of long experience and much skill, Durkin won't make a mistake today. Of the mistake he made last week, in the tenth race, referring to a horse named Palm Bearer as Palm Freezer, he says, "I wanted to jump out the window." A race caller has to be accurate. The bettors are listening.

So are the trainers. Racing is full of jokers. Caesar Kimmel, who helps his son, the trainer John Kimmel, name horses, and who knows Durkin, has presented his acquaintance with tongue twisters like Flat Fleet Feet and Shiny City Shoes. One of Durkin's favorite race-calling moments came several years ago, at Saratoga, when he reported, "The fleet-footed filly Flat Fleet Feet flies four furlongs in forty-four and four."

Durkin has called the Belmont Stakes since 1991, when Hansel, the winner of that year's Preakness, beat Strike the Gold, winner of the Kentucky Derby, by what Durkin described as "a desperate head in a spellbinding finish." If the field is as large at this year's race, on June 5th, as it was at the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness, Durkin won't be able to do much but name the horses and their positions, but the Belmont is a long race, a mile and a half, and attrition could winnow it to poetic size. Whatever the pace, there is one sure thing: Durkin will have a word for it. —Jane Smiley

POSTCARD FROM MONTANA

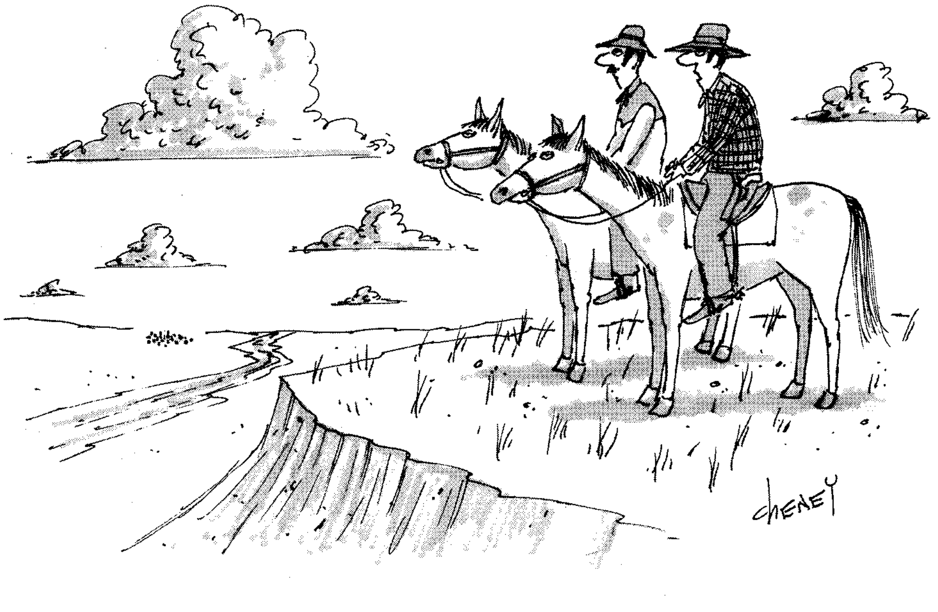
Life in the fast lane slows down.



MONTANA has long been a state where the official injunction to drive at a speed that is "reasonable and prudent" meant doing ninety to a crossroads market for a quart of milk and being passed by a grandmother in a pickup truck, or even by the highway patrol, which until last week had better things to do than to pull over what in some states might be called "speeders." But on May 27th, at sundown, the last automotive frontier in America was closed. The legendary "Montanabahn"—a strip of scenic interstate six hundred and eighty miles long—became just another highway. Marc Racicot, the governor of the last remaining state without a speed limit, signed a bill mandating seventy-five miles per hour as the law of the land.

Rudy Stanko, a cattle buyer and amateur stock-car racer from Billings, was ticketed twice in 1996 under the "reasonable and prudent" statute, once for doing eighty-five in a Camaro, another time for hitting a hundred and two in a tricked-out 1978 Lincoln Continental. With the help of his attorney, Penelope Strong, Stanko fought the fines to the state supreme court, arguing that, as a racer, he was used to high speeds and that, anyway, the law was vague. What's reasonable and prudent in a state where gridlock is as rare as cappuccino?

It was Stanko's case that convinced the state legislature that maybe people needed things spelled out for them. A call to Stanko's home the other day was answered by a family friend named Ed Wagner. "Rudy's doing a hundred and twenty days in the Fergus County jail," Wagner said. "That's what they finally nailed him for." The judge had seen fit to punish Stanko to the full extent of the law for two reckless-driving tickets he had picked up in one of the stricter counties. Wagner added, "He drives fast, but he's a damn good driver."



"Hard to tell from here. Could be buzzards. Could be grief counsellors."

It was easy to get Governor Racicot on the phone, since his home number is listed. "I won't miss 'reasonable and prudent,'" Racicot said. The Governor, an early supporter of George W. Bush's candidacy for President ("I'm a Western governor—I know a good horse"), was on his way to San Diego to speak to a Republican women's club. "I stay within the limits," the Governor said. By this he meant a steady seventy-five. "We found that with ten million visitors, and only nine hundred thousand residents, we needed to set a pace and rhythm on our highways."

Colonel Craig Reap, the head of the Montana Highway Patrol, expanded on what Governor Racicot meant by "pace and rhythm." "It's not good when you have the ninety-five- and hundred-mile-per-hour people mixing with the fifty-five and sixty-five people," Reap said. "We had two hundred and sixty-five traffic fatalities in 1997—a twelve-year high—and too many physical confrontations. The fast people would tailgate, give off with rude hand gestures, and sometimes pull over and get into fistfights."

Many Montanans are offended by the new law, but only, it turns out, on principle. "We have a lot of distance in Montana, and seventy-five doesn't get it," Doug Lair, a sheep rancher in Big Timber, said over the phone. "I don't think I ever went over a hundred and forty, but, anyhow, I have three kids now. You go from Porsches to minivans, and you start having responsible thoughts about family and safety and all that."

With Rudy Stanko behind bars, his lawyer, Penelope Strong, agreed to stand in for him on a final, legal joyride in her Saab 9000. Strong said she believed that the old "reasonable and prudent" law was unfair because only the "courthouse club"—lawyers, cops, and city-hall workers—knew how fast they could speed without being arrested, while tourists and other locals would be ticketed. Even so, she said, "I will sorely miss the old order." Then she cranked it up to seventy-five. We proceeded through the Bozeman Pass, below the snowy tops of the Bridger Mountains, as semis, U-Hauls, and mothers with children in car seats passed us, prudently.

—Steve Chapple

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LETTER FROM MIAMI

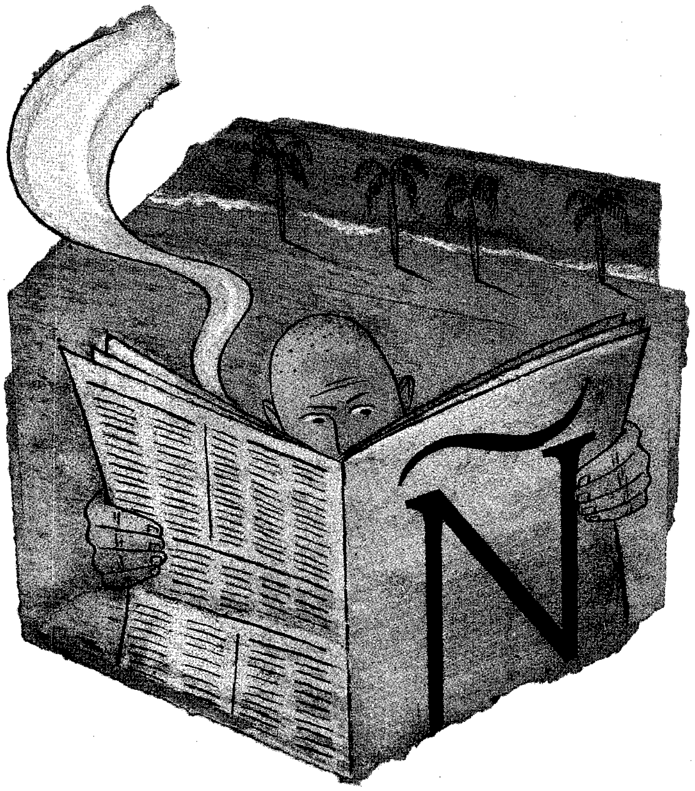
THE HERALD'S CUBAN REVOLUTION

How the Miami newspaper got caught between the pressure for more profit and the city's Hispanic community.

BY MIMI SWARTZ

DAVID LAWRENCE had been the publisher of the Miami *Herald* for three years when he began to receive death threats from anti-Castro Cuban groups. Excrement was smeared on curbside newspaper boxes, and *Herald* executives became frightened enough to inform the F.B.I. Lawrence equipped his Pontiac Bonneville with a remote-control ignition, to avoid being killed by a bomb, and he also installed a carbon-monoxide detector, so that he couldn't be asphyxiated by someone piping exhaust fumes through a hole in the floorboard. He relied on these devices in the early nineties, after "Miami Vice" had come to define the place, and the city once known for Jackie Gleason and ancient Jewish retirees was associated in the popular imagination with cocaine cowboys, money launderers, and angry exiles.

Lawrence still shudders at the memory of that "harsh and ugly time." When I visited him last winter, in his enormous office overlooking Biscayne Bay, Lawrence, who is fifty-seven, looked so white he fairly gleamed, with snowy hair, pale skin, and the stolid build of middle age. Yet he projected the urgency of a young firebrand as he described his nine years at the *Herald*. When he arrived in Miami, in 1989, the paper was being buffeted by ethnic hostilities, and had been losing readers for at least four years. His mission, he told me, had been to "understand diversity to its fullest meaning," and to help this city, with a population of two million, point the way to America's multi-ethnic future, by showing the rest of the country "how you work it out." A sin-



The freestanding El Nuevo Herald retired the idea that one paper could unite Miami.

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

cere, if somewhat self-dramatizing, idealist, Lawrence had been determined to make the *Herald* a key part of that process.

Instead, Lawrence's critics argue, a once great paper—the training ground for some of the best reporters at the country's best newspapers—deteriorated substantially on his watch, perhaps beyond repair. It is generally believed that over the last decade the *Herald*, which is owned by Knight-Ridder, has lost both its national stature and much of its influence in the local community. Circulation has dropped by a hundred thousand, though last year the *Herald* posted a generous profit margin of eighteen per cent. Part of the decline, certainly, can be attributed to the problems that have afflicted all metropolitan dailies: the flight of traditional subscribers to the suburbs; corporate pressures for higher earnings; and the encroachment of new media. But, critics charge, the *Herald's* biggest problem was a lack of creativity and vision, which was most obvious in the paper's many attempts to engage Miami's immigrant population, the largest of any American city.

"The melting pot has become a salad," I was told more than once in Miami's Spanish-speaking neighborhoods. Forty years after the Cuban revolution, Miami-Dade County is twenty per cent Anglo, twenty per cent African-American, and sixty per cent Hispanic—Cubans, Nicaraguans, Colombians, Venezuelans, and so on. In "City on the Edge," published in 1993, the social scientists Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, of Princeton University and Florida International University, respectively, noted that modern Miami had two parallel social systems instead of one mainstream population, and they described the process by which "biculturalism has emerged as an alternative . . . to full assimilation into American culture." No longer do immigrants necessarily have to become more American to thrive; in fact, Americans might have to become more like the immigrants—a process that Portes and Stepick observed in Miami and labelled "acculturation in reverse."

In particular, Miami is a city more Cuban than American. Though the percentage of Cubans within Miami's Spanish-speaking population has declined in recent years, Cuban power continues to grow: Cuban immigrants or their descendants now include the mayor of Miami-Dade County, the mayor of Coral Gables, the superintendent of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the Miami-Dade police chief, the head of the state university in Miami, and the state prosecutor for Dade County. The earliest group of Cubans to flee the Castro regime consisted of educated, ambitious exiles, not desperate, impoverished refugees. For that group, "Miami was a pit stop, a restaging area," says Jim Mullin, the editor of Miami's *New Times*, an alternative weekly. "Assimilation was not on the agenda." By the late eighties, when most exiles were willing to admit that—in the words of one *Herald* editor—"Castro was going to die in his sleep," the Cubans had created in Miami their own banks, businesses, and voting blocs, in which Anglos played little or no role. "They're outsiders," one successful Latino told me, with obvious satisfaction.

Many Anglos succumbed to the city's exotic new atmosphere and have come to appreciate the ubiquitous aroma of *café cubano*. Others, however, speak euphemistically about how "Miami isn't the place it used to be," and grouse about being snubbed in a hardware store because they can't remember the Spanish word for "hammer." The *Herald* columnist Dave Barry says, "That feeling of being connected to everyone else isn't here. I've never been to a place where there's less of that feeling."

Some Anglos moved to neighboring Broward County, where their numbers rose eight per cent between 1990 and 1997. In 1998, one former Miamian told the Washington *Post's* William Booth why she had left: "You order a Coke without ice and you get ice. You say no starch and you get starch. You call government offices and they can't take a decent message in English. . . . You go to the mall and you watch as the clerks wait on the Spanish speakers before you. . . . You realize, My God, this is what it's like to be the minority."

THE *Herald* was accustomed to thinking of itself as a national newspaper that happened to be based in Miami—or, as one editor puts it, "a great newspaper in a community that

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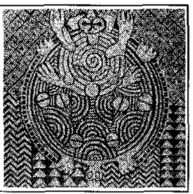

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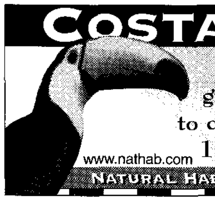

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didn't deserve it." During the seventies and eighties, the paper won nine Pulitzer Prizes and had the reputation of being sophisticated and innovative. It had bureaus in Jerusalem and Beijing, and its Sunday magazine, *Tropic*, was widely regarded as one of the best such magazines in the country. Enterprising *Herald* reporters went after Gary Hart and the Iran-Contra affair when bigger papers couldn't be bothered, and *Herald* writers like Edna Buchanan, John Katzenbach, Madeleine Blais, Carl Hiaasen, and Dave Barry were encouraged to develop distinct, sometimes flamboyant voices.

But in the mid-eighties, just when the demand for higher profits began to transform the newspaper industry, Miami itself changed. The Cold War ended, and much of the city's strategic importance to Washington was lost. At the same time, immigrants were arriving in growing numbers from Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, and the region's economic base—tourism—was threatened by racial hostilities and a rising crime rate. Miami began to seem dangerous and slightly foreign. Among the Anglos who didn't retreat to the suburbs, "some decided to accommodate," says Max Castro, a University of Miami social scientist, who is also a *Herald* columnist. "That's what the *Herald* has done." In other words, the newspaper became Miami's most visible experiment in acculturation in reverse.

The *Herald* made its first substantial overtures to the Spanish-speaking population in 1976. After much debate in the newsroom, *El Miami Herald* was launched—believed to be the first foreign-language supplement ever published by a major United States daily. *Herald* executives assumed that Cuban immigrants would quickly assimilate, with the result that the Spanish supplement would recruit future readers to the English paper. "When I came here, old white guys in Dockers ran the paper," Dave Barry, who arrived in the early eighties, says. "The thinking was that everyone would wake up one morning and be old white guys in Dockers, too."

The *Herald*, however, misjudged the insular passions of the exiles and their bitter distrust of Americans, who they felt had betrayed the anti-Castro cause. The paper set out to cover events in Cuba, in Spanish, in a factual and non-ideological manner, but the exiles wanted to read condemnations of the Communist regime. They showed their displeasure with *El Herald's* reporting by staging demonstrations outside the building. The exiles preferred to rely on local Cuban-American radio stations for news, because "they had the right political view of the world, which was that Castro is bad," Angel Castillo, Jr., a Miami attorney who worked at the *Herald* for a time, explained to me. The *Herald* management was at first amused and later exasperated by conspiracy theories in the exile community about which stories the *Herald* translated into Spanish.

When Fidel Castro opened the port of Mariel, in 1980, Freedom Flotillas brought a hundred and twenty-five thousand more Cubans to Miami in just one year. At the time, Castro—and the American press, led by the Miami *Herald*—reported that most of these immigrants were criminals, mental patients, and homosexuals. Under headlines such as "DADE FEARS REFUGEE WAVE," the *Herald* warned, "This is not the entrepreneurial class that moved in 15 years ago. A Cuban ghetto might develop." (Later research put the number of criminals and "undesirables" among the refugees at around ten per cent.) This coverage infuriated Cuban Americans and further alienated them from the Anglo establishment. Meanwhile, the effort to provide aid to the new arrivals gave the myriad Cuban businesses and community groups a new cohesion. In "World Class," an account of America's international cities, the Harvard business professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter noted that by the mid-eighties Miami's Latin community was generating about seven and a half billion dollars a year, which was "more than . . . many Latin American countries" were able to do.

For a time, the *Herald* tried to recruit new readers from the wealthy Anglo regions to the north. With much fanfare ("WE'RE BIG ON PALM BEACH!"), editors dispatched seasoned reporters to the revamped Treasure Coast and Palm Beach bureaus, only to discover that the people there didn't want to read about Miami. The Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel* and the Palm Beach *Post* were spending heavily to dominate these lucrative markets, and the *Herald* soon retreated to face its fractious audience back home.

ANTI-CASTRO political groups, race riots, and drug-related crime had made Miami a volatile and often dangerous place. Protests and bombings were frequent, and there was even an occasional assassination among feuding exile organizations. In this overheated atmosphere, the *Herald* "created a useful enemy," one Latino journalist told me, and it was often attacked for such transgressions as reviewing a play by a pro-Castro writer. In 1987, after the paper provoked a particularly fierce round of denunciations, *Herald* executives came up with a new plan to win over the Cuban community: they would revamp *El Herald* and create a real Spanish newspaper inside the English edition. Angel Castillo was recruited to be "the first Cuban-born" assistant managing editor for news, and was given a mandate to retool *El Herald* and "Cubanize" the English-language paper.

Castillo, whose family had left Cuba in 1960, was a graduate of Yale Law School and had worked at the St. Petersburg *Times* and at the New York *Times*. In high school, he had had a *Herald* paper route. The *Herald* touted all these qualifications in press releases about Castillo, but none of them served him well in the newsroom. "I was there as a revolutionary," says Castillo, a wry man, who still, a decade later, seems resentful about his experience. From the start, he made enemies by challenging the reporters' limited knowledge of Cuban affairs. The ambitious, young, mostly Anglo, mostly male reporters, who planned to move on from the *Herald*, had little interest in understanding Miami readers better. "It was never a local paper," says one former reporter, who is now at the Washington *Post*. "Pandering" became a newsroom buzzword as sometimes ludicrous efforts were made to seem relevant to the new audience. Reporters recall Castillo's insisting that a story about the zoo mention Cuban visitors' favorite animal.

In the Spanish-language supplement, Castillo wanted to publish comic-book-like *telenovelas* and Walter Mercado, a popular astrologer who was a Latino cross between Jeane Dixon and Liberace. He also wanted his own editorial pages, and he wanted his paper's name on the building. Most of all, he wanted reporters who spoke Spanish, since there were only a handful on the *Herald* staff. He got Walter Mercado and little else. Independent editorial pages were considered too dangerous in Miami's unstable political climate. "We were castrated from Day One," Castillo says.

Then, in September of 1987, the *Herald* published a piece that quoted an *El Herald* columnist, Tomas Regalado, on the subject of Radio Martí, the United States-backed radio broadcasts to Cuba. In his next column, Regalado accused the reporter of manufacturing quotations, but the *Herald's* managing editor, Pete Weitzel, killed the column, because, he said, it was inaccurate. Castillo, who was in Missouri at the time, attending a conference on multiculturalism, returned to Miami and submitted his resignation. A few weeks later, the Cuban American National Foundation, which was the most powerful exile group in town, ran a full-page ad in the *Herald* denouncing the paper.

The upgraded Spanish-language supplement that Castillo had been working on, named *El Nuevo Herald*, had its début a month after his departure, with a small news staff of its own. Until a few years ago, Castillo continued to do legal work for the *Herald* and to serve as a cultural liaison with the Cuban community. "I called myself the editor-in-exile," he told me.

THE *Herald* staffers were feeling battered by the time David Lawrence arrived in Miami, in 1989, and were generally optimistic about having a former editor in the publisher's job. Lawrence had spent his childhood on a chicken farm in upstate New York; he had started his career as a reporter at the St. Petersburg *Times* and by the age of thirty-three had become the editor of the Charlotte *Observer*. He incessantly preached the virtues of hard work, honesty, fairness, and decency. Lawrence was transferred to Miami from another Knight-Ridder paper, the Detroit *Free Press*, which had come to be referred to as "the Friendly," following a company-wide shift to "civic journalism." This approach, informed by marketing studies and focus groups, sought to boost circulation by giving readers fewer crimes and exposés and more uplifting news and community crusades, but it was not notably successful. One of Lawrence's last acts at the *Free Press* had been to help negotiate a joint operating agreement with Gannett, the owner of the Detroit *News*, which merged the production facilities of two faltering papers to lower overhead.

When Lawrence arrived in Miami, the paper, which had been in eight out of every ten households in 1960, had slipped to four out of every ten. Though Lawrence maintained that he had no mandate to soften the paper, some editors and reporters were anxious. In a July, 1989, *Herald* story announcing the appointment of the new publisher, Celia Dugger wrote, "Lawrence's appointment comes at a time when Knight-Ridder has undertaken an intensive campaign to make its newspapers friendlier institutions, trusted and even beloved by readers. . . . Will the *Herald* pander to readers to avoid making them mad? Will the paper stay away from tough, critical reporting because it makes some readers uncomfortable? Lawrence said the answer to these questions is no."

Lawrence regarded the move from the economically depressed, racially riven city of Detroit to the economically depressed, racially riven city of Miami as going "from the frying pan to the frying pan." He believed that there were no fundamental differences between the two cities. "I was told by many people, 'You're going to have to deal differently with the Cuban community because they come from a different tradition,' " he said. "But I don't believe that my standards of fairness change for one group or another." The editor of *New Times*, Jim Mullin, who was one of Lawrence's constant critics, recalls that "to have seen David Lawrence come in with such confidence, with such certainty about the right thing to do, I found endearingly amusing and now, I think, regrettable."

Lawrence crammed for Miami as if it were a final exam: he hired a Spanish tutor, who placed new words on little note cards around Lawrence's house; he immersed himself in Miami's history, reading recently published books by Joan Didion and T. D. Allman. He joined civic organizations; he answered his own phone and took page proofs to Miami Heat games.

Lawrence also began writing Sunday columns that often read like sermons, with titles such as "We Need to Stop Labeling Each Other." In print, he grieved when his four-year-old daughter was afraid to go to a birthday party because her host might not speak English. He apologized to the handicapped for a cartoon they might have found objectionable; he commiserated with Jews who perceived a *Herald* story as anti-Israeli. "He wanted everyone to hold hands and sing 'Kumbaya,'" one former reporter said. "But you will never in a million years get that to happen in Miami."

THE merger, in 1974, of the Knight newspaper chain with the more profit-oriented Ridder papers eventually imposed heavy cost-cutting on the *Herald*. Foreign bureaus were closed, and investigative reporting—once a trademark of the paper—was scaled back.

Meanwhile, Lawrence tried to instill a new set of values. He "trained the newsroom," explained one editor, by sending complimentary notes to reporters, which became known as Dave Raves. The stories he commended, however, were often not those which exposed corruption or injustice but those which had inspiring themes or promoted unity. When Lawrence discovered how thoroughly hated the newspaper was in the Cuban community (the newspaper monitored all the anti-*Herald* broadsides on Cuban radio), he tried to win points with the critics. In one famous incident, he turned over his column to Jorge Mas Canosa, the multimillionaire head of the Cuban American National Foundation and self-appointed successor to Castro. Many Cuban Americans saw Mas, who died in 1997, as a dangerous bully, and the *Herald's* own investigative teams were uncovering plenty of unsavory facts about his business dealings. Nevertheless, Lawrence portrayed him as a sensitive family man. ("This is the Jorge Mas Canosa that he believes too few of us know," Lawrence told his readers.) Lisandro Perez, one of a small group of Cubans who had been recruited to advise the paper, remembers telling the publisher, "I know you're coming in optimistic that you can resolve issues here. But the hard-liners don't want fairness. They want you to print what they want or you're gonna have conflict." That proved to be true.

In January of 1992, a *Herald* editorial condemned legislation, sponsored by Representative Robert Torricelli, of New Jersey, to toughen the Cuban embargo, which the Cuban American National Foundation had lobbied hard for. Mas went on a local Cuban-American radio station to denounce the paper, calling its employees "left-leaning dupes of the Castro regime." Lawrence, Mas charged, used his role to "insult, misinform, distort, destroy men and institutions." What followed was, according to Jim Mullin, "David Lawrence's moment in the crucible."

Though many people thought that Lawrence should have defused the situation with humor—or allowed *Herald* reporters to expose Mas as a blowhard—he couldn't resist getting into a personal dispute. In two columns, headlined "C'MON MR. MAS, BE FAIR" and "C'MON MR. MAS, BE FAIR PART II," Lawrence begged for reason. But Mas kept up the pressure. He formed an anti-defamation committee, reportedly commissioned academic studies of *Herald* bias, and threatened a boycott. His supporters plastered the slogan "*Yo No Creo en El Herald*"—"I don't believe in the *Herald*"—on buses and billboards.

With characteristic self-righteousness, Lawrence invoked the principle of free speech. "All the huffing and bluster that he [Mas] can muster still won't give him control of this newspaper," he declared in his column. "Ever." Mas countered with the spirit of revolution. "It would be far easier for me to join your powerful establishment," he wrote to the paper in response. "I am blessed with a wonderful family and financial resources. I could go golfing on Sunday at the country club and dock a yacht on Biscayne Bay under the shadow of your huge building. Sometimes, however, we must take the difficult road, and I am determined to fight for the dignity, the integrity, and the values cherished by our Cuban American community constantly assailed by the *Herald*."

Vandalism and anonymous death threats began, and Lawrence suddenly found himself living in terror. The hostilities continued for months. Finally, the Inter American Press Association, which normally investigates media intimidation in countries under totalitarian rule, stepped in. It found guilt on both sides. "The *Herald*," its report stated, "had been slow to understand the new cultures within its readership area," while *Herald* critics had displayed "a lack of tolerance." Mas eventually declared a truce, and emerged with an even stronger position in the exile community. Lawrence ended up looking like a well-intentioned failure, who deserved the nickname that *New Times* had given him a few years back: Doormat Dave.

HURRICANE ANDREW, which devastated much of southern Miami in 1992, provided the perfect opportunity for the *Herald* to practice civic journalism. The paper, which won two Pulitzers, exposed the poor housing construction that had exacerbated the tragedy, and ran countless inspirational stories about neighbor helping neighbor across class and race barriers. "We were giving away papers in South Dade," Carl Hiaasen recalls, and executives doubled as delivery boys. But it wasn't long before the usual fissures appeared. Minority groups complained about having been shut out of the We Will Rebuild Committee, a blue-ribbon group of public-spirited (Anglo) citizens, headed by Alvah Chapman, who had been both the publisher of the *Herald* and a Knight-Ridder executive.

The hurricane had also levelled one of Miami's last solidly Anglo enclaves, South Dade, and when many residents chose to rebuild elsewhere Cuban Americans consolidated their power in the county. In the year after Andrew, Dade County sent a second Cuban American to Congress and elected more Cubans to the state legislature. In response, *Herald* executives again tried to win over Miami's Hispanics.

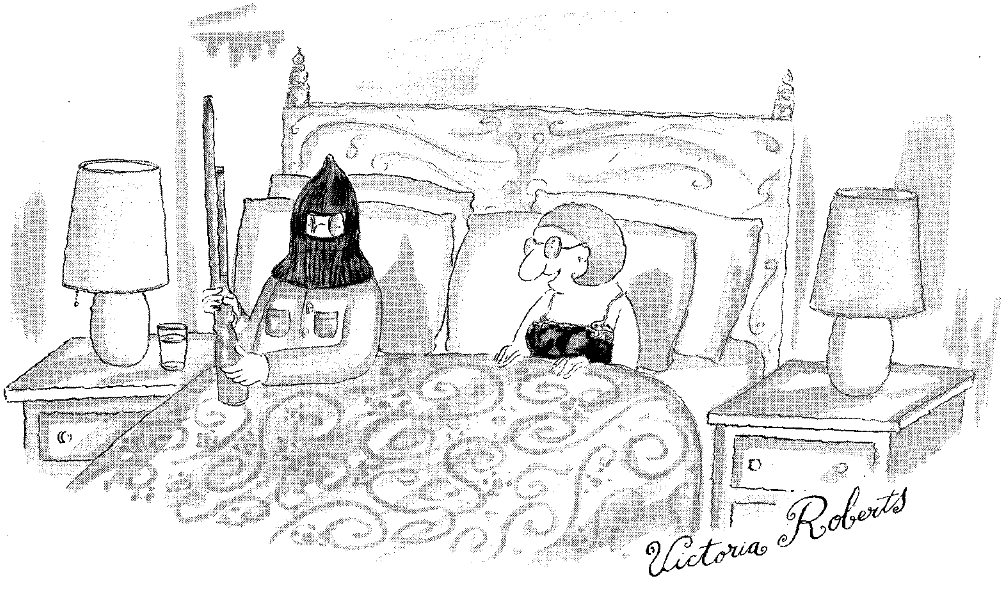
Since 1987, the Spanish supplement had been the English paper's poor relation (or "crazy aunt," in the words of one reporter). Its staff was always in turmoil, and was treated with suspicion and disdain by its *Herald* counterparts, who were paid far more. *El Nuevo* had lost any claim to editorial integrity and was regarded simply as a sop to the exile groups. In 1993, for instance, *Herald* reporters described the Cuban American National Foundation's loss of influence in Washington with a story headlined "FOUNDATION LOSES CLOUT IN WASHINGTON." The headline in *El Nuevo* that day was "CLINTON MANTIENE RELACION CORDIAL CON LA FUNDACION" ("CLINTON MAINTAINS CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH THE FOUNDATION"). Hiaasen's memory of *El Nuevo* in this period is: "Every year Castro would get a new disease. It usually involved his testicles and his dick falling off. Smart Cubans—they laugh at this stuff."

Lawrence decided to give the supplement more stature by importing fresh talent, and he brought in Alvaro Vargas Llosa, the twenty-six-year-old son of the Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa. Alvaro Vargas Llosa had been working as a journalist in Spain and was handsome, cultured, and cosmopolitan. The *Herald* pressured the Justice Department to get him the kind of visa normally reserved for top corporate executives, and it offered him an annual salary of a hundred and ten thousand dollars. Vargas Llosa was not hired as editor-in-chief; instead, he was put in charge of "Opiniones," the op-ed page. According to Mark Seibel, the *Herald* city editor, who had previously reported on Latin America and had directed the paper's prize-winning Iran-Contra coverage, Vargas Llosa proceeded to produce "the best opinion pages anywhere." Gabriel García Márquez, Octavio Paz, and Carlos Fuentes appeared, and so did the Cuban Foreign Minister, Roberto Robaina, and Fidel Castro's daughter, Alina Fernández Revuelta, providing sophisticated, if nonincendiary, commentary on the shifting world of the Americas. "There was a tremendous vacuum in this town for a newspaper in Spanish," Vargas Llosa told me. "You would hear it everywhere you went. It was very frustrating."

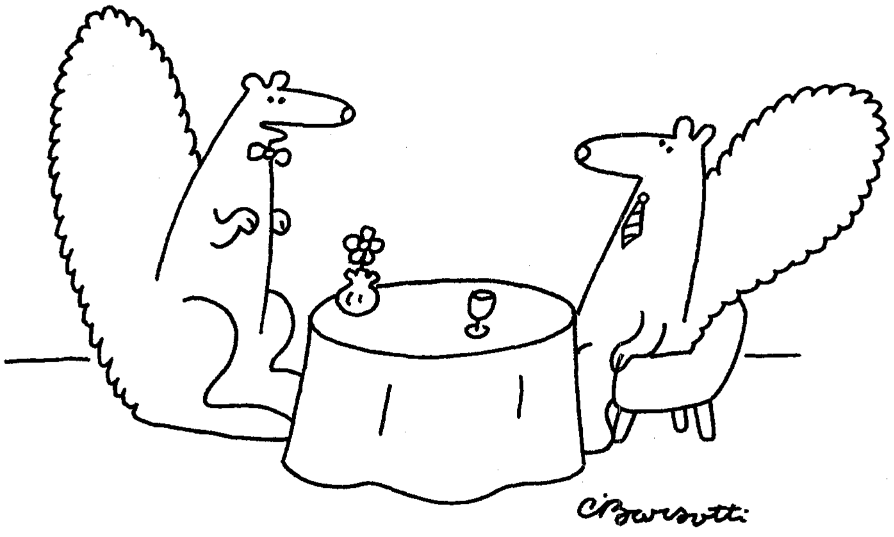
Eventually, Vargas Llosa, like his predecessors, demanded more: a larger staff, a network of international stringers, and editorial independence from the *Herald*. But, after much debate within the paper, Lawrence refused to sever the two editions and allow them to compete. "The reasons they would give were that this was a very divided community, a tense community," Vargas Llosa said. " 'We will only add to that division if we allow the Spanish-language paper to become a paper in its own right.' That was a valid argument, but my point was that you would accentuate division by not letting the Spanish community see itself reflected." Knight-Ridder, however, had calculated that separating the two papers might cause as much as a sixteen-per-cent drop in *Herald* circulation.

After three years, Vargas Llosa confronted the limits of his power. In addition, his relationship with Lawrence had soured over Vargas Llosa's public criticism of the Peruvian President, Alberto Fujimori. "I had become so vocal and verbal about the changes that I had to step down if the changes weren't going to be implemented," says Vargas Llosa, who resigned in 1995. *El Nuevo* reverted to its earlier state. One Latino reporter who writes for both editions told me that he was embarrassed by unsupported accusations that appeared in the paper, and which would never have been permitted in the *Herald*. He said, "One time I asked Dave Lawrence, 'Would this be published in English?' He said no." (Occasionally, both papers stumbled. Last July, *El Nuevo* and the *Herald* printed a story involving a politically connected Cuban surgeon who claimed to have witnessed Castro on his deathbed. It turned out that the woman wasn't a surgeon, wasn't politically connected, and hadn't met Castro, who, of course, hadn't been dying.)

IN 1995, the decline of the Miami *Herald* became a national story. Under orders from Knight-Ridder, Lawrence cut thirty-two million dollars from the operating budget and eliminated two hundred jobs. He unveiled a plan (called "The Nine Pillars of Excellence") to sharpen the paper's focus according to reader preferences—a market-driven exercise in civic journalism that prompted a derisive article in the New York *Times*. Also in 1995, a *Time* list of the country's ten best newspapers depicted the *Herald's* loss of stature



"What ever happened to 'Never go to bed angry'?"



"There'll be a slight delay. The chef's been attacked by a blue jay."

• •

with a crumpled front page. The following year, the *Columbia Journalism Review* reported that critics had noted a drop in investigative pieces in the *Herald* and quoted one former editor who said that the paper had fallen victim to "special pleading," which meant that the powerful subjects of articles could quash them in the executive offices—possibly, an unfortunate side effect of Lawrence's extensive involvement in local charities and community groups.

The *Herald* staff was stretched so thin that city hall, immigration, the police, and the federal courts were no longer full-time beats; corruption went unreported—unless, as sometimes happened, the *Herald* was scooped by smaller publications. "The good ole corrupt crackers and the good ole corrupt Latins realized they could do business," Mullin says. "The cascade of indictments and investigations has not stopped. It revealed a world that had not been explained by the *Herald* at all." On one county-tax scandal the *Herald* was beaten so badly by a local business publication that the editor rented a billboard across from the newspaper's offices to brag about it.

The *Herald* newsroom could now boast more Latin or bilingual reporters. Its pages were dotted with news from Venezuela, Colombia, and Central America, and also from the Caribbean, and it published lots of positive stories about local Latino leaders. (Two notable exceptions were a 1996 story that finally exposed Mas's questionable business dealings, and the *Herald's* tough coverage of the 1997 mayoral race, which overturned the reëlection of Mayor Xavier Suarez. The series won a Pulitzer this year.) Still, the paper remained unloved and largely unread by Miami's Hispanic population. "I have to say the only mail I got was from elderly white women," one reporter told me.

In April of 1998, Tony Ridder, the C.E.O. of Knight-Ridder, announced that the corporate headquarters would be moving from Miami to California. The company, he declared, needed to be closer to technology advances in Silicon Valley. In Miami, the move was widely interpreted as an expression of Knight-Ridder's pessimism about the future of the *Herald*. Alvaro Vargas Llosa says, "The *Herald* will have to resign itself to a smaller circulation, to allow itself to be reduced to a hard-core readership of Anglos, and to allow a Spanish-speaking paper to become the dominant paper in Miami."

Dave Lawrence's vision of the *Herald* as a unifying force had been discredited, and nine years as its publisher had wearied him. So when a wealthy Democrat suggested that he run for governor against Jeb Bush he gave the offer serious consideration and then, in his column, explained why he wouldn't run. "I sometimes think—as so many people do at various points in their lives—of what I want to do when I 'grow up,'" he wrote.

"Earth to Dave," Carl Hiaasen wrote in response. "There are no prospects. *Nada*. You can't possibly win." He referred to Lawrence as "Publisher Loco."

By July of 1998, Knight-Ridder's stock price had dropped, and it wanted to raise its profit-margin goal to twenty-five per cent. For Lawrence, this meant more cutbacks; a few Knight-Ridder executives believe that the move was designed to force him out. "When Dave was asked this last time, he just wasn't gonna do it," Lawrence's friend Jim Towey recalls. "I could see it in his face." Lawrence asked Knight-Ridder to reconsider the cuts. The company refused, whereupon he announced his resignation.

When I spoke with Lawrence in January, he was preparing to make a martyr's exit from the *Herald*, and the mahogany shelves in his office had already been cleared of his mementos. In the *Herald* story about his resignation, a close friend described Lawrence as "a steady hand in the city through riots and through hurricanes," and he clearly sees himself that way. (In January, he became the head of a new foundation dedicated to early-childhood development.) "I think we're all transition figures in this enterprise," he told me.

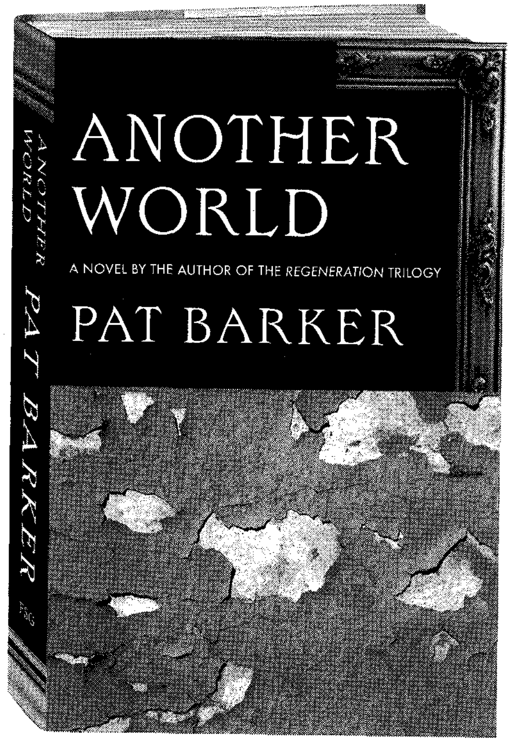
One crucial step in the transition was the announcement that Alberto Ibargüen, the publisher of *El Nuevo Herald*, would replace Lawrence. Ibargüen, who is fifty-five, is half Cuban and half Puerto Rican and is married to an Argentinean. The *Herald* defined him as "a made-to-order newspaper publisher for Miami, a city suspended between cultures and continents. . . . A blue-eyed product of Caribbean genes and a privileged Northeastern upbringing, a high culture vulture just as comfortable slinging slang in English as in Spanish." The Latino community was jubilant over the choice.

Lawrence had recruited Ibargüen in 1995 from *Newsday*, where he had presided over the birth and death of New York *Newsday*, a new city edition of the venerable Long Island paper which was shut down after ten years because it failed to show a profit. That experience taught Ibargüen to make tough business and personnel decisions, and Knight-Ridder executives had been impressed by the inventive way he managed with minuscule resources at *El Nuevo*. But Ibargüen had also pressed hard to separate the two papers—and eventually prevailed, trumping executives' civic concerns about "unity" with an economic argument. He pointed out that some dealers were selling the Spanish part of the paper for a quarter and returning the rest to the *Herald* for a refund. In January of 1998, the freestanding *Nuevo Herald* made its début, and pulled in twenty-five per cent more advertising than the supplement had the year before. One of Ibargüen's first moves as publisher was to hire Carlos Castañeda, the respected editor of Puerto Rico's *El Nuevo Día*, and he began work on *El Nuevo Herald* in January of this year.

With Ibargüen in place, there was no more mention by Knight-Ridder of raising profit margins. The new publisher nevertheless killed *Tropic*, the beloved Sunday magazine, which was losing two million dollars a year, and he put some of that money into more investigative projects. Still, the newsroom is wary and somewhat ambivalent about the new publisher. Many editors and reporters worry that earlier cuts and compromises have permanently damaged the paper. Forty-three employees have left in the past year, and have not been replaced. The most recent departure was Doug Clifton, the executive editor and Lawrence's longtime lieutenant.

Ibargüen had been on the job only five months when I spoke to him in another huge *Herald* office, next door to Lawrence's old space. In flashy suspenders and an impeccable suit, he seemed ebullient, jumping about the room as he described his three improved, culturally customized Miami *Heralds:* one for Anglo Broward County, another for Dade County's Cuban-American population, and *El Nuevo*. Though circulation figures have yet to show much change, the idea that one newspaper could unite a diverse community has been retired. Alberto Ibargüen has no plans to write columns on brotherly love. "I'm just not bothered by the fact that we haven't all become one," he said. ♦

ANOTHER WORLD
Pat Barker



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FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX

ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

SHOOTING PUSHKIN

To film "Eugene Onegin," the actor went in search of the Russian writer's ghost.

BY RALPH FIENNES

It is January 13, 1998, and I'm on the overnight train from Moscow to Pskov, sharing a two-berth compartment with Andrei, my guide and interpreter. Our final destination is Mikhailovskoye, the country estate of Alexander Pushkin: my sister Martha and I are making a film of "Eugene Onegin," and this is the only important place in Pushkin's life that I have yet to visit. "Eugene Onegin" has been haunting me ever since I was introduced to it, in 1984, by Lloyd Trott, a teacher at my drama school who passionately encouraged us to widen our reading. I watched an actress in the year above mine perform Tatyana's letter as a monologue, at Lloyd's suggestion; when he told me where the speech had come from, I immediately borrowed the Charles Johnston translation from the school library.

Pushkin greatly admired the poetry of Byron, but he is without Byron's cynical aloofness. In fact, this quality is more an attribute of Pushkin's eponymous hero, an aristocratic dandy who becomes bored with the amorous intrigues of St. Petersburg society and moves to the estate of his recently deceased uncle, in the country. There he meets a neighbor, the poet Vladimir Lensky, and these two begin a friendship of opposites: Onegin's cynicism versus Lensky's idealism. Lensky introduces Onegin to his fiancée, Olga Larina, and to her sister Tatyana. Pushkin gently mocks Lensky's naïveté, but he is full of tender affection for his heroine, Tatyana, when she writes the cool Onegin a letter declaring her love for him. Onegin pointedly rejects Tatyana, however, and soon afterward his rustic idyll comes to an end when he arouses his best friend's anger by dancing continually with Olga at Tatyana's name-day celebration. Lensky impetuously challenges Onegin to a duel, and is killed.

Reading "Eugene Onegin" for the first time, I was struck by the complementary arcs of its hero and its heroine, and I found myself imagining it as a play or a film. Of course, I wanted to play Onegin. His is the tragedy of the cynic. In the final section of the poem, after years of self-imposed exile, Onegin meets Tatyana again at a ball in St. Petersburg; she is now a sophisticated married woman, and Onegin falls obsessively in love with her. He pursues her, and eventually confronts her in her own home, where Tatyana tells him that, although she still cares for him, she will remain faithful to her husband. Pushkin leaves the reader of his poem a witness to the crushed figure of Onegin, alone and rejected.

The cinematic potential of the poem crystallized for me only when I was filming "The Cormorant," a BBC film, in Wales, in 1992. While waiting between camera setups, I drew crude, storyboard-style pictures of scenes from "Onegin"; I then wrote a loose treatment and showed it to Martha. Slowly, the idea of the film grew between us. The producer Ileen Maisel championed our initial outline and introduced us to the writer Michael Ignatieff, who immediately saw its possibilities. By December, 1994, he had written the first draft of the screenplay.

In April of 1997, I made my first trip to Russia, playing Chekhov's Ivanov in the Almeida Theatre Company's production, which toured in Moscow; I visited the local sites specifically associated with Pushkin before joining Martha in St. Petersburg, where she was scouting locations. As I learned more about Pushkin's life, I was struck by the peculiar way that it echoed his great poem. In 1824, the young poet was exiled to the family's country estate because of his liberal views and inflammatory behavior, a year before the Decembrist uprising, in which several of his friends were executed or deported to Siberia. It was at Mikhailovskoye that he wrote many of the central passages of "Eugene

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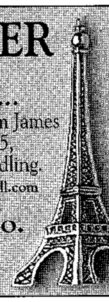

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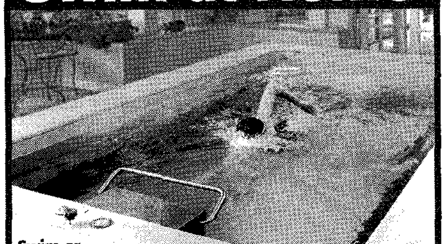
Onegin." In 1826, Nicholas I granted Pushkin permission to return to Moscow, where he was forced to accept a somewhat humiliating rank in the Tsar's court. At that time, the poet pursued a Moscow beauty, Natalya Goncharova, who could never fully respond to his desire for her but agreed to marry him, in 1831. Several years later, when the couple was living in St. Petersburg, Natalya attracted the attention of a young French officer, Georges d'Anthès, and his unabashed interest in her provoked Pushkin's jealousy. In 1837—despised by the aristocracy but already acknowledged as a great writer—Pushkin was shot by d'Anthès in a duel over the honor of his wife.

ALL the great Russian writers defer to Alexander Pushkin, but for non-Russian speakers he is elusive. I don't speak Russian, and, while Pushkin's short stories are entertaining and lightly ironic in translation, in his great poetic works—"Onegin," "The Bronze Horseman," and "The Gypsies"—the language barrier seems to prevent a complete union of reader and poet: the sense of Pushkin's words is inevitably being adjusted to facilitate the rhyme. Vladimir Nabokov, in the foreword to his deliberately literal version of "Eugene Onegin," writes that it is impossible to translate the poem—that it is best to sacrifice "elegance, euphony, clarity, good taste, modern usage, and even grammar" for something closer to Pushkin's line-by-line meaning. Nabokov's translation is in non-rhyming verse form, and, despite its eccentricities, his is the one I have come to like most. Nabokov also insists that anyone who really wishes to appreciate "Onegin" should learn Russian and, initially, I tried to take his advice. On the train to St. Petersburg, during my first visit, I would laboriously translate an odd line with the help of my Russian companions, but my only sense of achievement came from decoding the Cyrillic letters; I couldn't get near the sense of the poetry. Learning the Russian alphabet and a few phrases is one thing, but reading "Onegin" fluently in a short space of time—well, I couldn't. It was blithely ludicrous.

Now, on the train to Pskov, I am very happy to be cocooned in this compartment, leaving Moscow behind, mercifully free of telephones. And yet I am nervous about discussing the script of "Onegin" with Andrei. It has evolved slowly and with difficulty, yet I tell myself that it has a coherence that it lacked before. Andrei quizzes me about our interpretation of the poem. He asks me why I think certain characters behave as

Fiennes with his sister: "Of course, I wanted to play Onegin. His was the tragedy of the cynic." Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe.



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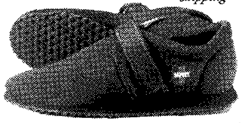

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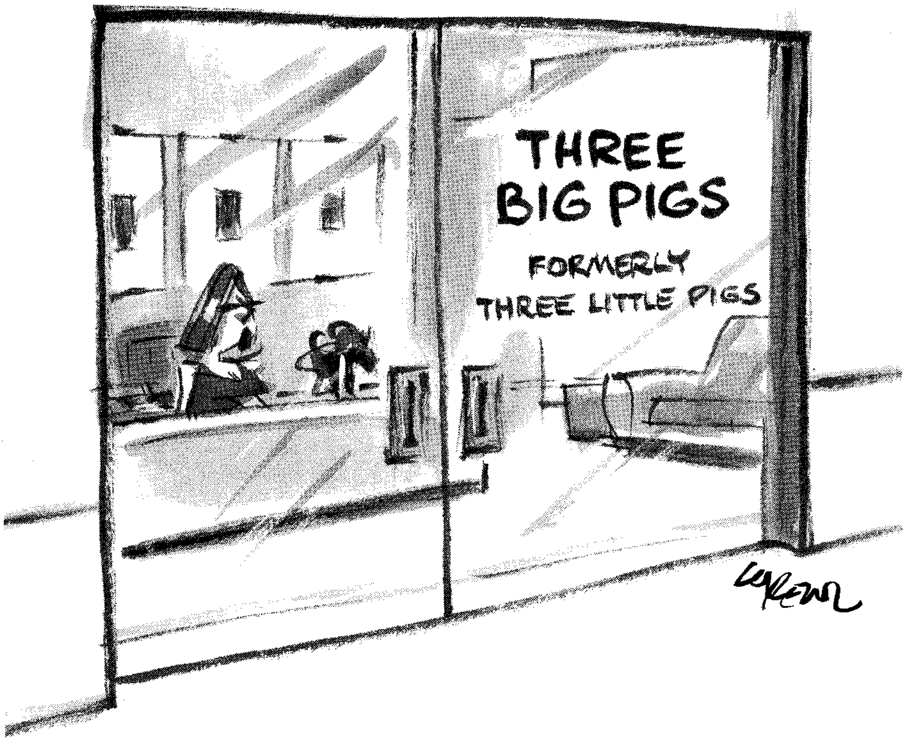

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they do. Pushkin is Russia's Shakespeare: to his countrymen, he is still alive, and the actions of his characters still provoke discussion and debate. Why doesn't Tatyana leave with Onegin? Does she really love her husband? Does Onegin really love Tatyana? I feel that my replies are inadequate, even though Martha and I have struggled with these questions for many hours.

Andrei goes to sleep, and I continue making notes on the script. Michael Ignatieff gave us a screenplay that was economical in exactly the way we wanted, but without Pushkin's commentary the poem's emotional clarity somehow eluded us. A young screenwriter, Peter Ettedgui, was instrumental in reshaping the material to reveal the arc of Onegin and Tatyana's relationship without losing the leanness that Michael had achieved. The greatest challenge is the dialogue: avoiding both pastiche and glaring contemporary idioms; finding the right tautness. After scrawling suggested amendments in black pencil, I sleep heavily for about four hours. At five in the morning, I wake up in a state of uncertainty and expectation, and try to imagine the landscape I'm passing through: I think of Pushkin's poem "Demons," in which spirits and devils pursue a sleigh at night, chasing it into limbo.

AT 8 A.M. a radio is switched on from a central control somewhere on the train, and harsh, tuneless music forces us out of our beds. Soon the train stops: we have arrived at Pskov. It's still dark outside. We are greeted by Natasha, a striking woman with thick swaths of blond hair. She has come from St. Petersburg with a driver and a minibus to take us to the estate. In the half-light, as we carry our bags across an ice-encrusted platform, a feeling of secret elation hits me. On the way to the minibus, I hear a metallic tapping behind me: a man is walking the length of the train, checking the wheels for metal fatigue. I cannot believe it: isn't this the same man who taps the wheels of the train when Greta Garbo's Anna Karenina arrives in Moscow? I stand watching him, and sense a peculiar blurring between the invented and the real.

Natasha has brought some breakfast for us: coffee in a flask, biscuits, bread, smoked salmon, ham, and cheese. There is also some vodka. Drinking vodka in Russia is a reassuring inevitability. We draw up on the side of the road for twenty minutes to eat. The journey from St. Petersburg to Mikhailovskoye by horse and carriage took about six days in Pushkin's time. He would have stopped at roadside stations for the night; some of his letters were written during those overnight stops. The journey by road from Pskov to Mikhailovskoye takes about an hour and forty minutes, and as it gets brighter I can see the surrounding countryside more clearly. We pass frozen rivers, small villages of wooden houses that are painted different colors and decorated with carved woodwork. Some of these houses are warped by weather and time. I idly comment on their attractive simplicity. "You wouldn't last a night, I expect," Natasha says. "They are damp, with no water or plumbing, no electricity—and you would be smoked out by the stoves." The villages come and go between icy fields and stretches of silver birch and pine forest.

After driving for an hour and a half, we pull up in front of a run-down modern building. I am told that this is a conference center for Mikhailovskoye, which houses various Pushkin seminars and events. It is very desolate. Natasha goes inside to find our guide, and ten minutes later she returns with a friendly and enthusiastic-looking man, whom she introduces as Sasha. Sasha is the guardian of Mikhailovskoye. He gazes at us intensely, through glasses resting on a nose that soon turns pink in the cold. There is a great warmth about him. Andrei is translating. He tells me that Sasha is speaking the most beautiful but slightly outdated Russian, and that he is addressing us as "my angels." Sasha leans forward with purpose when I ask him questions, and his love for his work shines out of him. He quotes stanzas of "Onegin" by heart, and I wonder whether he carries the whole poem in his head.

We travel the short distance from the conference center to the estate of Mikhailovskoye itself, and park by a fence that marks the perimeter of the garden. I notice some builders' trucks, carpenters' tools lying by a shed, and a metal-framed bed propped up against a wall. Sasha tells us that Mikhailovskoye is being refurbished for the 1999 Pushkin bicentennial celebrations. The builders and decorators will stay here while they carry out their work. There has been no snowfall recently, and everything looks spare, naked, and poor. In English, the word "estate" conjures up something quite substantial, even grand, but many Russian estates are quite modest.

As we walk through the gardens, the layout of Mikhailovskoye becomes clear. The house itself is a simple one-story wooden structure. On either side of it are two smaller buildings; one is a bathhouse, where Pushkin's nurse lived, and the other is the kitchen. Sasha explains that the house is not the actual building Pushkin lived in—that has been destroyed and rebuilt at least twice, this particular version having been constructed after the Second World War. The rooms are denuded of furniture. Things are being packed up for the refurbishment scheme, and big cases and tea chests occupy the center of the floor. I have already visited Pushkin's apartment in St. Petersburg, and although it was moving to walk through those rooms where Pushkin had lived, and to see the study where he wrote so many impassioned and impatient letters, it felt like a museum; its well-cared-for surfaces gave no suggestion of a home or a family life. Here, among the debris of storage boxes, tools, and midwinter detritus, I feel freer to reimagine Pushkin.

The house stands above the River Sorot. There is a steep bank from the doors at the back of the house to the river, which is partly frozen. We can see the small, dark silhouettes of fishermen on the ice, their lines disappearing through the holes they have drilled. Sasha tells us about a group of fishermen who were once caught on the ice as it broke up during a thaw and had to be helicoptered to safety. Did Pushkin stare out at the same antlike shapes poised above their fishing lines? Perhaps he walked down the steep path from the house and called to them on his way to the windmill, which lies about half a mile from the house. Pushkin carried a heavy stick with him when he walked, to keep his arm strong for holding a duelling pistol. There are many stories of duels fought by Pushkin as a young man—in one, he nonchalantly eats cherries as his opponent takes aim, fires, and misses.

As we head toward the frozen river, I am turning over in my mind the vast discrepancy between the immediate sensations of being here, absorbing Sasha's commentary, and the tortuous process of making a film. We are walk-

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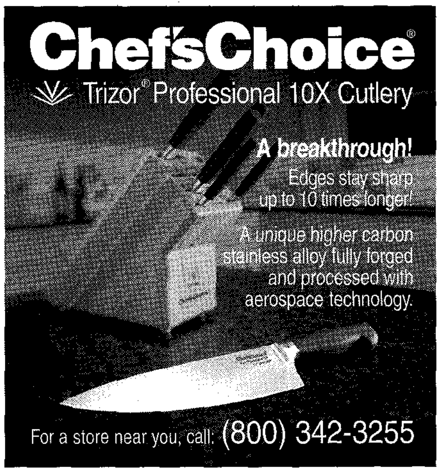

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ing toward the windmill, and I ask Sasha if it has any connection with the water mill at the site of the duel in "Onegin." He's not sure, but I ask him to describe the duel, the ritual—the events as Pushkin describes them. He punches a finger into the frozen snow at our feet. "Here is Onegin, here is Lensky, the barrier is here—about ten paces. They walk toward each other. Onegin fires first."

"Doesn't Lensky fire first?" I ask.

"No, no, Onegin," Sasha replies.

"Are you sure?" I say.

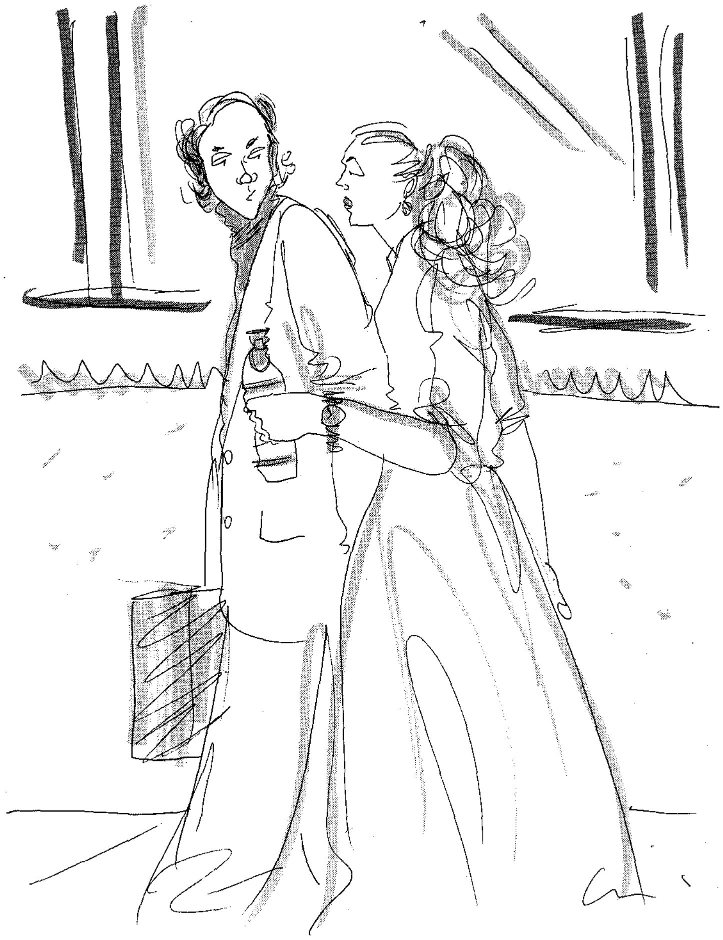
"Yes, yes, Onegin shoots first and kills him."

To my embarrassment, I see that I have been so preoccupied with the script that I have forgotten what changes we have made in key areas of the story. This moment is the beginning of an unwinding distrust within me about the way literature is adapted into film. Even with the best of intentions, this appropriation is often a distortion or a mutation for the sake of audience satisfaction and accessibility. Martha and I have tried to remain faithful to Pushkin's poem, but we have also been told that a contemporary audience may not sympathize with Onegin, or may not understand why Tatyana would write him a passionate love letter on the basis of one meeting: how are we to make these things credible?

In our script, Onegin arrives late for the duel, as he does in the poem, but he makes a substantial attempt at reconciliation, which Lensky refuses. Lensky then fires first and wounds Onegin, whereupon Onegin returns fire, but with a look of deep reluctance on his face. My conversation with Sasha at Mikhailovskoye spurs me to reëxamine this scene, and, on reflection, our script seems a betrayal of the original. In the poem, Onegin is more glib, as if any show of remorse were a sign of weakness:

> Malevolently now,
> similar to hereditary foes,
> as in a frightful, enigmatic dream,
> they for each other, in the stillness,
> prepare destruction coolly.

Onegin's "look of deep reluctance" in our screenplay now seems sentimental;



"Who does your water?"

the poem's portrayal of this confrontation is far more disturbing and realistic. Only when one man lies dead should the barbarity of the duel sink in—not before.

Weeks later, when we shoot the scene—by a small lake in the south of England—my misgivings return, and I am unable to give Onegin a moment of conscience immediately before he pulls the trigger. From my position on the jetty we have built, I see Martha, frustrated at my intransigence, gesticulating on the shore with the producers. I am caught between my strong instinct not to betray Onegin as I've come to see him and the call of collaboration with Martha, and I feel alternately guilty and determined. How Martha and I understand this scene will continue to change in the editing process, as we debate the many plausible versions of the duel, trying to convey the way in which the ritual imposes itself on the protagonists. In our final cut, the duel is almost a moment of time suspended, in which the characters have no choice.

After our walk around the grounds at Mikhailovskoye, Sasha takes us to a neighboring estate called Trigorskoye. This was the home of the Osipov family, and it has been suggested that the Osipovs provided inspiration for the Larins: there is a garden bench at Trigorskoye known as Tatyana's bench. Pushkin describes Tatyana rushing from the house to the privacy of the garden when she thinks that Onegin has come to respond to the letter. Suddenly, he appears before her and tells her that he cannot reciprocate her feelings and is not made for married life. Sitting on this legendary bench at Trigorskoye, I try to visualize their encounter.

Like Pushkin's home, Trigorskoye is being given a bicentennial spring cleaning: there are tractors, earthmovers, and piles of builders' rubbish. I know that in the coming summers many people will visit these places, and perhaps, over the years, they will acquire a patina of archival polish. But on this day, January 14, 1998, there is virtually no one here—there are only ghosts, and my visit is a loose ribbon of possible imaginings. I remember a pastel sketch by the Russian painter Serov, who portrayed the poet on horseback riding off into the country. In his sketch we see

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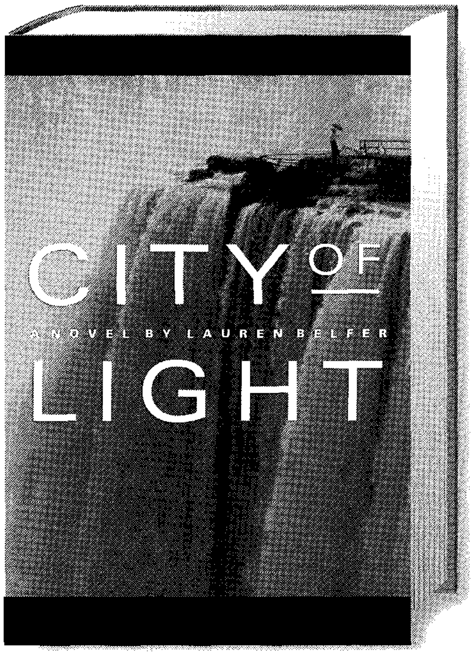

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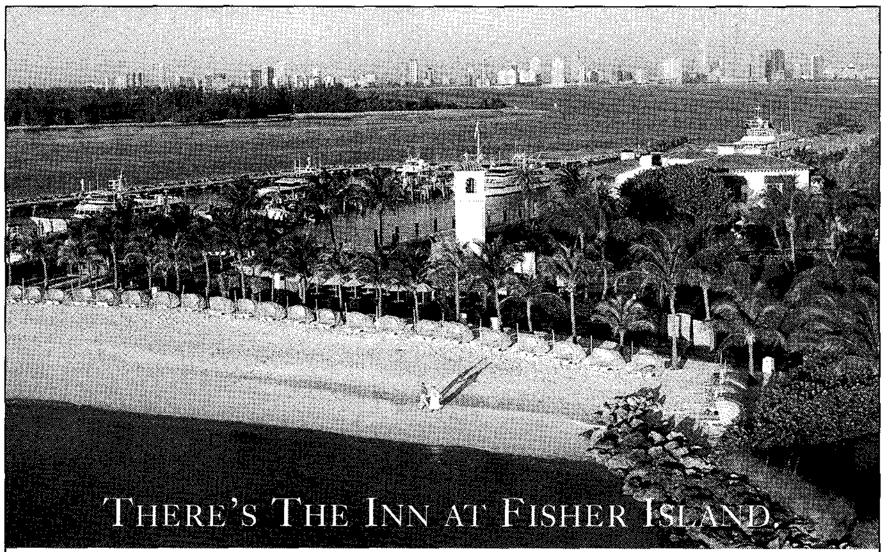

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Pushkin hurrying away from us, perhaps to visit with the Osipovs, where he will meet Anna Petrovna Kern, with whom he is infatuated. Or maybe he is simply riding out to free his mind and to escape the claustrophobia of his home. I feel that I, too, may glimpse him at any moment.

EIGHT weeks later, we are shooting in St. Petersburg, and it is my first day of playing Onegin. I have set my alarm clock for an hour earlier than necessary: I want to read the poem one more time. We've brought fake snow with us, but I'm crossing my fingers that there will be no thaw, that the Neva will stay frozen, that the slight snowfall of the previous evening will have increased during the night. We are on a very tight shooting schedule. I glance out the window and uncross my fingers: the snow is falling thicker and thicker. The sky is a milky gray—a perfect light. Everywhere, the architecture of St. Petersburg is outlined in white, and seems to promise the world I have stared at in so many paintings.

Our morning's location is the Peter and Paul Fortress, a forbidding defensive embankment built by Peter the Great. The Neva is frozen. The dark shapes of the fortress and the white of the snow look extraordinary. No one can believe our luck. We don't speak of it. There is an atmosphere of concentration and purpose. The scene is relatively simple: Onegin, unsettled at having reëncountered Tatyana, walks through the city alone. Each ritual of preparation for the shot is heavy with meaning for me; makeup, hair, wardrobe, actor are like pieces of a puzzle that are finally coming together to form Onegin. Later, I will be able to remember only images and sensations: the frozen river; Martha in her white fur hat and padded silver jacket; the camera crew all swathed in Arctic clothing; my top hat, flapping cloak, numb fingers, runny nose.

In an ideal world, Martha and I would have shot every frame in Russia, but we could afford to remain there only a week. In the end, we shot the frozen Neva twice: once in St. Petersburg, when it really was the Neva and it really was frozen, and once in Leavesdon, in Hertfordshire, England, on a disused airfield. There, using exaggerated perspective, our designer, Jim Clay, created a sleigh ride and a nineteenth-century ice-skating party. Our days in St. Petersburg were thrilling, but would an "Onegin" shot entirely on location have made a better film? Not necessarily. Not one scene of "Dr. Zhivago" was shot in Russia, and in an earlier adaptation of another Pushkin story—"The Queen of Spades"—St. Petersburg was replicated at Welwyn Studios, in North London. Constraints of money and time can fuel all the bizarre energies of cinematic artifice, giving it a reality that is more powerful because it must suggest what it cannot show.

By the end of March, Onegin's world is being re-created at Shepperton Studios, near London. One afternoon in April, my English agent, Larry Dalzell, comes to visit me there, and I ask him if he would like to see the set. I know they are filming the ballroom sequence, which is when Liv Tyler, as Tatyana, makes her entrance, having been transformed from a country girl into a St. Petersburg princess. I take Larry downstairs, through the heavy doors of the soundstage, and across some electric cables, to a small doorway onto a balcony from which one can look down onto the dance floor. He gasps as he takes in the scale of the set: vast columns dwarf the dancers, and the floor is a kaleidoscope of uniforms and ballgowns.

There is an anticipatory moment of silence: Martha is about to go for a take. The assistant director, Tommy Gormley, calls for "playback," the music of the polonaise begins, and the room comes alive: people dance, talk, bow, acknowledge one another. Then, to our right, double doors open and Liv Tyler, serene and beautiful as Tatyana, walks into the room. People smile and step aside for her, and a Steadicam follows behind almost respectfully, like an unusual bodyguard. Larry sees no lights being rigged, no rehearsal, just an extraordinarily fluid movement of camera and actor. This is cinema as theatre. Then the assistant director calls "Cut!" and the spell is broken.

During my visit to Mikhailovskoye, I could not have guessed how Pushkin's characters would be interpreted and given life, or how the ballroom scene would look, or how the two scenes of rejection would find their balance in the film. Two months later, those experiences of walking through an avenue of linden trees in Pushkin's gardens with my Russian companions or taking turns photographing one another on Tatyana's bench seem like moments of innocence.

OUR January pilgrimage with Sasha ends at the monastery where Pushkin is buried. Pushkin's tomb, which is outdoors, is covered with a kind of Perspex lid to protect it from frost, and it appears to be squeezed between the exterior wall of the church and the parapet that separates the churchyard from the road. Sasha tells us the authorities were nervous that the presence of Pushkin's coffin in St. Petersburg might lead to a popular—and potentially inflammatory—display of grief, and so it was taken posthaste to Mikhailovskoye. Unlike all the monuments to Pushkin I have seen in St. Petersburg and Moscow, this tomb is plain and unadorned. Natasha has brought some flowers with her, and an apple. She gives us each a stem as an offering to Pushkin. Just before we move away, Natasha places her apple on the edge of the tomb.

I do not speak Russian, and I do not understand it, but I understand this gesture. It says that a dead writer can still be a contemporary writer—that he can move us now, at any moment. Changes of time, place, custom, manners, and language can alter our perspective on a great writer, but they cannot extinguish the power of his words on the page. Our film, however wayward, is a response to that power. In "Onegin," after all, the reader is addressed directly, as the poet's friend and partner. It's impossible to read Pushkin's intimate farewell at the poem's end and not feel that he is speaking to you personally:

> Whoever you be, O my reader—
> friend, foe—I wish with you
> to part at present as a pal.
> Farewell. Whatever you in my wake
> sought in these careless strophes—
> tumultuous recollections,
> relief from labors,
> live pictures or bons mots,
> or faults of grammar—
> God grant that you, in this book
> for recreation, for the daydream,
> for the heart, for jousts in journals,
> may find at least a crumb.
> Upon which, let us part, farewell! ♦

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OVERLOOKED BY THE TONYS

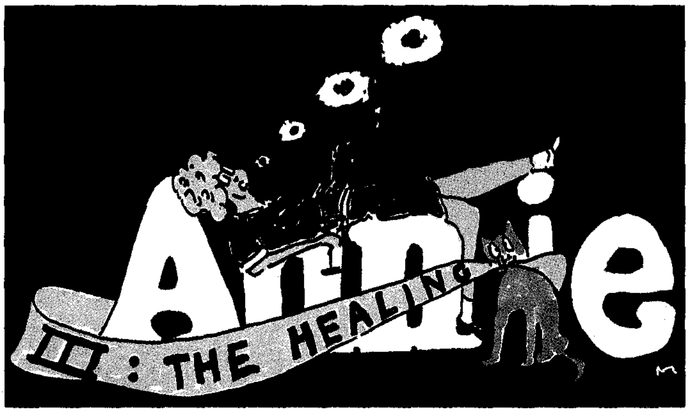
Some musicals you may have missed.

BY EMILY NUNN

"MONTHLY MAINTENANCE!" "Rent" is for slackers. Here, finally, is a musical based on Puccini's "La Bohème" for people who can afford theatre tickets. Synopsis: Mimi and Rodolfo, two high-strung but passionate risk arbitrageurs, find they have icky mold spores growing in the central cooling system of their penthouse co-op with wraparound terrace—but only after Mimi has spent months and months with an aggravating tickle in her throat. Rodolfo finds her constant coughing so annoying that he moves out. He dates around a little bit, but soon returns, only to find his beloved addicted to nasal spray and echinacea. Mimi dies minutes after his arrival, but as Rodolfo is packing up the espresso maker and other mementos of their love she miraculously springs back to life. They go to St. Bart's.

"'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE." Disney continues to revitalize the theatre district with this foray into Jacobean drama, a lusty cartoon costume musical very, very loosely based on John Ford's 1629 tragedy, and set in Dogpatch, U.S.A. Join Mickey and Minnie, Mickey's murderous alcoholic mother, Minnie's jealous and impotent half-brother, Goofy, and his litter of scene-stealing six-clawed step-pups, and a few other "closely related" characters for this hilarious yet blood-soaked hillbilly romp. When the furtive lovers Mickey and Minnie discover that they're actually brother and sister, they're sure to bring the house down with their moving love song, "It's a Small World, After All."

"ANNIE III: THE HEALING." Little Orphan Annie has grown up, but so have her childhood scars. Now she's just a miserable mess with a lot of money and a nasty coke habit. A psychoanalyst hired by Daddy Warbucks discovers that Older Orphan Annie dealt with the abandonment issues long ago; now she suffers from a modern malady that doctors call "negative visage appeal syndrome"—in other words, she's plug ugly. The wistful number "A Good Personality and a Nickel (Will Get You a Cup of Coffee)" helps our heroine wake up to reality, and the next thing we know it's out with the shrinks and in with the staff of Georgette Klinger, who give Annie the singingest, dancingest makeover and hair-straightening the Great White Way has ever seen.



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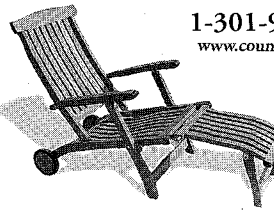

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ANNALS OF RELIGION

THE SAINT AND THE HOLOCAUST

In canonizing Edith Stein, has the Church misrepresented her life, and history?

BY JAMES CARROLL

Stein, a Jew who became a nun and died at Auschwitz, is at the center of the dispute over the Christianization of the Holocaust.

COURTESY THE EDITH STEIN ARCHIVE OF THE COLOGNE CARMEL

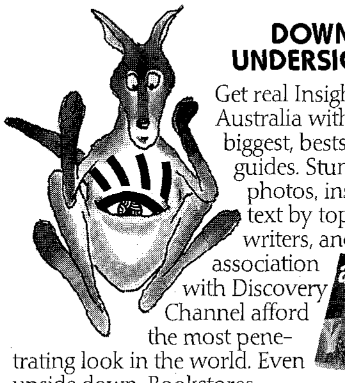
ECHT is a Dutch town near the River Maas, not far from the German border. I visited Echt last summer, on a kind of solitary pilgrimage. I had come looking for the contemplatives' chapel in the Carmelite monastery, and was surprised to find it at the edge of a shopping district. Adjoining the chapel was a cloister with a stout brick façade, and beyond it was the Café Apollo, with a sign announcing, in English, "Dancing." Far less obtrusive was a stone tablet on a wall near the chapel door which featured the face of Edith Stein, a Carmelite nun who had fled to the monastery in 1938 and was snatched from it by the Gestapo four years later. I was the only visitor late on a rainy afternoon. The chapel door was unlocked, and it opened onto a stark room with twelve wooden pews. A grainy photograph of the famous nun hung on the wall to the left, behind a vase holding two craning birds-of-paradise. As a nun, Stein was known as Sister Benedicta, but here the name she was given at her birth defines her still.

Edith Stein was born a Jew in 1891 in Breslau, Silesia, which was then under German control but is now part of Poland. She was a gifted young woman who made her mark as a philosopher, earning a Ph.D. under the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, at Freiburg. Often described as Husserl's protégée, she made significant contributions to his thought, but they are rarely noted. Her dissertation, "On the Problem of Empathy," which she defended in 1916, was the first of several important philosophical works, but her later devotional writings have been more widely acknowledged. Stein abandoned Jewish religious practice in her student years, and became a Catholic in 1922, at the age of thirty. Her inspiration was St. Teresa of Ávila, the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic and Carmelite reformer, and, in 1933, Stein herself entered the Carmelite order and eventually took the name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Last October 11th in Rome, in a canonization in St. Peter's Square, Pope John Paul II named her a saint, not because of the devoted life she led but because, a week after being taken away from Echt, she was killed in Auschwitz. The Pope, in his sermon, called her "this eminent daughter of Israel and faithful daughter of the Church," and said, "May her witness constantly strengthen the bridge of mutual understanding between Jews and Christians."

So far, the canonization of Edith Stein has done very little to strengthen that bridge. The Church maintains that she was killed because she was a Catholic, in retaliation for an anti-Nazi protest waged by the Dutch Catholic bishops. But critics of the canonization, Jews and non-Jews alike, contend that Stein was murdered because she was a Jew, and they believe that the canonization is another attempt by the Church to Christianize the Holocaust—to present it as something that happened as much to the Church as to the Jews—and, not incidentally, to deflect criticism of its own relationship to the crimes of the Nazis. A week before Edith Stein's canonization, the Pope beatified Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac, the wartime primate of the Catholic Church in Croatia, even though the Church he presided over was mortally compromised by Croatia's pro-Nazi regime. Soon after the canonization, reports began to surface of a campaign inside the Vatican to beatify Pope Pius XII, whose failure to forthrightly defend the Jews is the most disputed—though not necessarily the most significant—aspect of the Church's record during the Holocaust. The Church has always maintained that the charges against Pius were unfounded, but last year's Vatican statement "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah" moved from a mere denial of his culpability to an assertion of his extraordinary heroism—a heroism on behalf of the Jews—and inevitably raised questions about the manipulation of history. And this month, at a Papal Mass in Warsaw, the Pope is expected to beatify a hundred and eight Polish Catholics who were killed in the Second World War, mostly in Nazi death camps, including fifteen who perished at Auschwitz. The Nazis killed millions of Poles, but this celebration of Catholic martyrdom as part of the Shoah will undoubtedly prove controversial. In this context, how Edith Stein's story is remembered becomes all the more important.

When I was a young seminarian, in the early sixties, I picked up a book in the seminary library entitled "Walls Are Crumbling: Seven Jewish Philosophers Discover Christ," by John M. Oesterreicher. One chapter was headed "Edith Stein: Witness of Love." At the time, Anne Frank's "Diary of a Young Girl" was making real the horror of the genocide by giving one victim a name, a face, and a story. Edith Stein did the same for me and for many other Catholics. It never occurred to us then that there could be something offensive to Jews in our honoring her as "a young woman in search of the truth," as the Pope called her in October. Now, by elevating her death not only above her own life but above the deaths of six million Jews, the Church has made Edith Stein a flash point instead of a bridge. Her story forces one to ask, What is a convert? What is a Jew? What is a martyr? And, with regard to a specific event that took place in Boston eleven years ago, What is a miracle?

THERE are three stages to canonization in the Catholic Church. First, a person is declared venerable by the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of the Saints. If that person can be proved either to have been a martyr or to have performed "one uncontested miracle," as the Encyclopedia of Catholicism puts it (the miracle can be posthumous), he or she is beatified. Then, after confirmation of at least one more miracle, that person's name is added to the list, or canon, of saints. The Church takes for granted the normalcy of what is called the supernatural; but, precisely because of the conviction that God can and does intervene in human life in surprising ways, the Church does not want the mystery cheapened by superstition, religious hysteria, or magical



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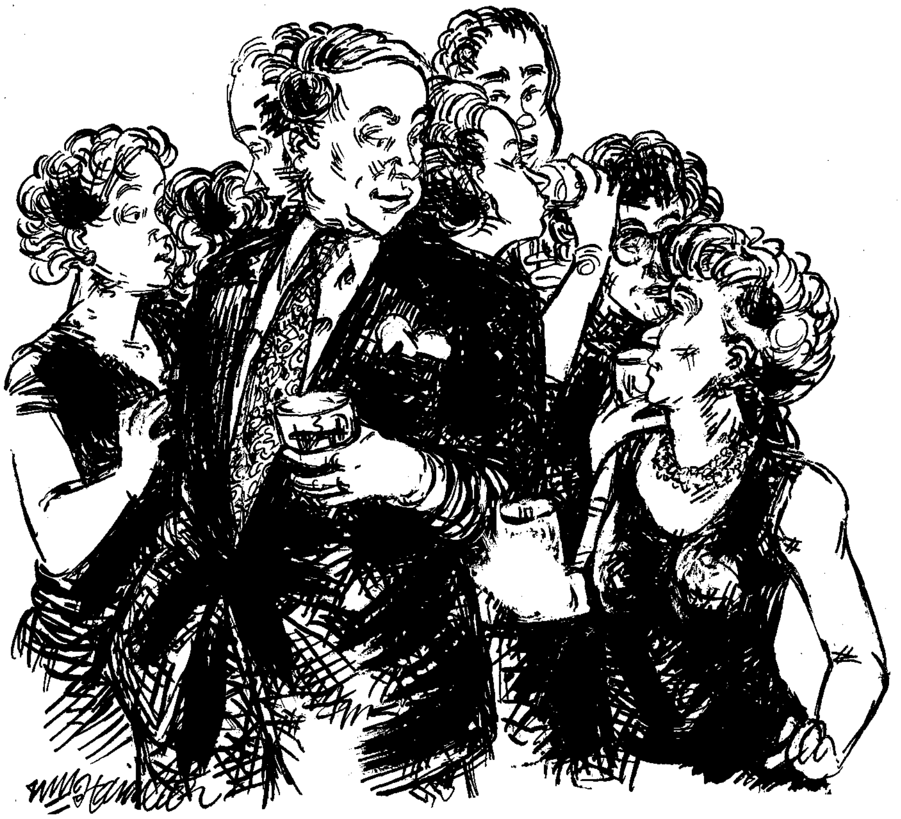

"I know, and it's not just me—my whole family has been smug for hundreds of years."

• •

thinking. (The term "hocus-pocus" originates in *hoc est enim corpus meum*, the Latin words of the Consecration of the Mass.) The veneration of saints is an affirmation that no rigid lines should be drawn between the living and the dead; a miracle is a caution against drawing such lines between what is possible and what is impossible.

Under Pope John Paul II, almost three hundred people have been canonized, and hundreds of miracles have been authenticated by the Vatican Congregation. The procedure moves *via negativa:* a miracle is deemed to have occurred only when all conceivable mundane explanations of the phenomenon have been eliminated. In effect, the Church has adapted the scientific method to this spiritual purpose. Referring to medical miracles, an official of the Congregation was recently quoted as saying, "We do not accept any cure as a miracle unless we are scientifically, humanly certain that the cure has been instantaneous, not expected, and complete." He added, "If God intervenes and works a miracle, he doesn't do it halfway." Edith Stein was beatified as a martyr in 1987, but she needed to be credited with one miracle in order to be canonized. According to the Church, she performed it that year.

The event involved a two-year-old Catholic child in Brockton, Massachusetts, who, because she was born on August 8th—the eve of the anniversary of Edith Stein's death—had been named Benedicta. (Her parents had named another of their children Tzipora, for Elie Wiesel's sister, who died in the Holocaust.) While Benedicta was in the care of her older siblings, she managed to open a Tylenol bottle and swallow many pills, and she became ill. First taken to a local hospital, she was quickly transferred to Massachusetts General, in Boston. There she was treated by a pediatric gastroenterologist named Ronald Kleinman, but her condition worsened.

Over the next few days, Dr. Kleinman's team consulted by telephone with Michael W. Shannon, a pediatrician and toxicologist (and a specialist in Tylenol overdose) at the Massachusetts Poison Control system, which is based in Boston's Children's Hospital. Although most children in such circumstances recover, Dr. Kleinman was worried about Benedicta. "I have seen kids die of acetaminophen toxicity," he told me not long ago, as we sat in a small conference room at Mass General. Dr. Kleinman is a lean man with gray hair and appears to be on the young side of fifty. He spoke gravely. "Her liver was beginning to shut down, she was moving toward coma, and had developed a blood-borne infection." He explained the situation to her parents, and, with a circle of friends, they prayed to Sister Benedicta. Within several days, the little girl's condition stabilized and began to improve. Dr. Kleinman wrote on her chart, "This child has made a remarkable recovery." Benedicta went home healthy.

Several years went by. Then an official from the archdiocese of Boston, Monsignor Robert Deeley, got in touch with Dr. Kleinman, and explained that the Catholic Church was investigating the possibility that Benedicta's recovery was "miraculous." It had been miraculous, of course, to Benedicta's family; for them, the return to health of their child represented a confirmation of faith. In fact, about a year after Benedicta's recovery, an article to that effect was published in *Catholic Digest*. Carmelite officials in Rome read the article and started the wheels of the Church bureaucracy moving. (By that time, the Church's impulse to equate Jewish and Catholic suffering during the Holocaust was growing stronger: in June of 1988, the Pope told Jewish leaders in Vienna that Nazi "intentions to kill were clearly directed against the Jewish people, but also against the faith of those who revere in the Jew Jesus of Nazareth.")

Dr. Kleinman testified before an archdiocesan tribunal in 1993 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, once a vibrant immigrant parish in Boston's old West End but now a church marooned in the shadow of Mass General. Present were the Vice Postulator, who advances the cause of sainthood; a Catholic physician appointed by the archdiocese; and Monsignor Deeley. "It took about four and a half hours, on a very hot day," Dr. Kleinman said of his testimony. "Sometime in the next year, I got a transcript of the proceeding—in both English and Latin." Then, about three years ago, Dr. Kleinman agreed to meet with a board of doctors at the Vatican. "They were skeptical. In some ways, that suggests that the Church was doing its best to be careful," he told me. "I did not want to get involved in any judgment about whether this was a 'miracle' or not. I'm Jewish. Thinking about miracles is not part of the way I think."

DR. SHANNON, the toxicologist, also testified before the archdiocesan tribunal. In late 1992, Monsignor Deeley and others came to his office at Children's Hospital, and as they sat listening to him, Dr. Shannon recalled, they were "poker-faced." Dr. Shannon, an African-American, is tall and thin, and appears to be in his mid-forties. His office is decorated with numerous photographs of children, and on a shelf behind his desk there is a copy of a textbook he co-edited, "Clinical Management of Poisoning and Drug Overdose." He is one of the authors of a chapter on acetaminophen, which is sold as Tylenol. Dr. Shannon, who has never discussed the case in public, told me, "As a toxicologist for the last fourteen years, I have taken care of hundreds of Tylenol-overdose cases every year, and probably, in my career, thousands. I have seen the complications that Benedicta had. They happen sometimes. But it doesn't change the fact that ninety-nine per cent of the time children with Tylenol overdoses fully recover." Dr. Shannon consulted with Mass General over the telephone—he never personally examined Benedicta—and he confirmed its course of treatment. He told Monsignor Deeley's tribunal that, thanks to Dr. Kleinman's team, and to the availability of a highly effective antidote, Mucomyst, the course of Benedicta's recovery "was what was to be expected." He told me, "I remember being asked point-blank, 'Do you think this was a miracle?' To which I responded, 'No.' That was it. They left. I got a thank-you letter in February, 1993, and never heard from them again."

I went to see Monsignor Deeley, a tall, burly man of about fifty, in the Tribunal Building of the Archdiocese of Boston, on Lake Street in Brighton. His office, with warm panelling, a hint of old leather in the air, and a view of a neatly planted hillside, could have been in the Palazzi Vaticani. "I was the delegate judge," he said of his role in the miracle investigation. "We proceeded with the interviewing of the witnesses, the gathering of the medical testimony, and the interviews of the doctors and the nurses who were involved." He sent the findings to Rome, where they were reviewed by the Vatican medical board. "There was a dissenting vote as to whether it was a miracle," the Monsignor said. "And they put the dissenter in charge of a second investigation, and brought Dr. Kleinman over." I asked what the Vatican board had made of Dr. Shannon's testimony. "I have no idea. It was presented to them. They did have it," he said.

Last October, Dr. Kleinman was invited to the canonization in Rome. He met John Paul II and watched Benedicta, who is now fourteen, receive Communion from him. Dr. Kleinman has been criticized for his role in the investigation, and he has received what he describes as "nasty letters" from fellow-Jews. "I understand that this process of canonization has an in-your-face quality to it," he said. "Of course, Edith Stein died—was martyred—because she was a Jew. But she died a Catholic. That's my way of bridging those two unbridgeable ideas." As for the Church process for which he provided the needed testimony, he said, "When I think of applying the scientific method to things of faith, you end up with something that is not satisfying as science and not satisfying as religion." In fact, the Vatican officials who chose to discount the testimony of Dr. Shannon, a medical expert

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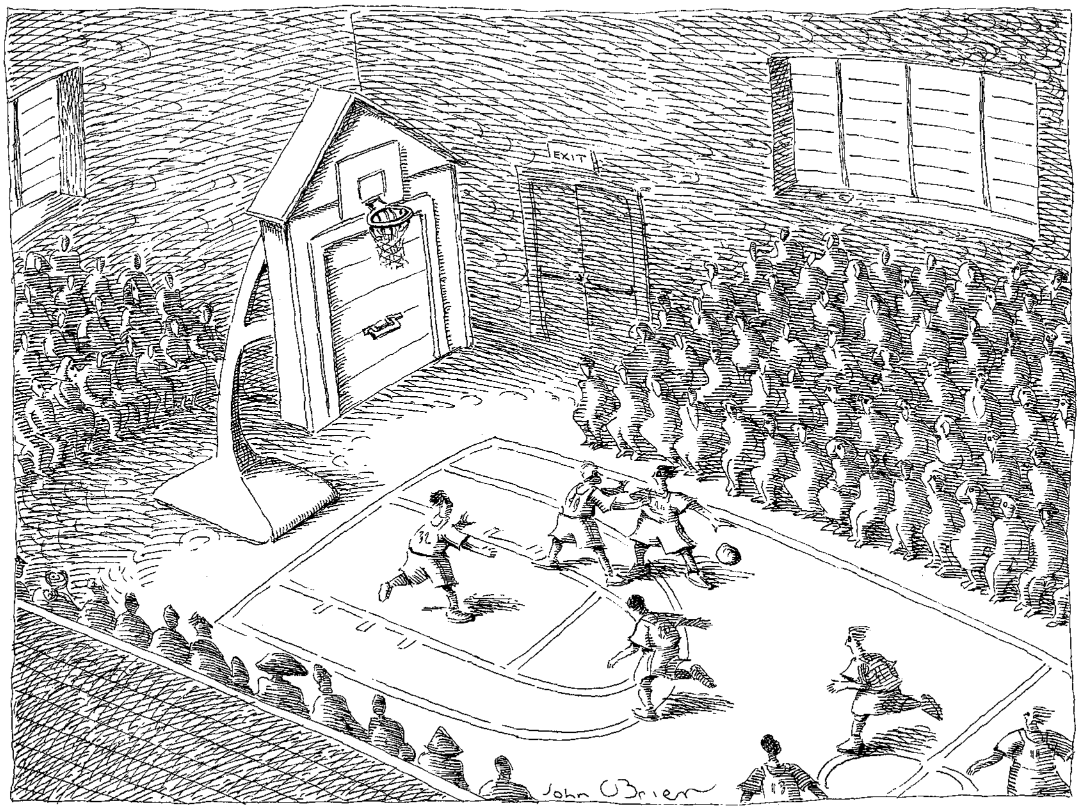
"That's not you talking, Justin, that's the sugar talking."

with intimate knowledge of a case aiming at "scientific, human certainty," subverted both science and religion, and, in the process, perhaps, the real value of the life of Edith Stein.

EDITH STEIN'S conversion to Catholicism had its roots in the carnage of the First World War, which she had glimpsed while working as a volunteer nurse. She had gone to comfort a woman who had just lost her husband in the fighting, and had been deeply moved by the consolation that the woman—who was herself a Christian convert from Judaism—was already drawing from "her unshakable faith in a living God." Stein later described the encounter as decisive. Everything we know about Stein suggests that she was deeply affected by the suffering around her, and that she was very conscious of the political changes that were exacerbating that suffering. "The world broke in two in 1922 or thereabout," as Willa Cather put it, and that epochal shift was reflected in Edith Stein's decision that year to join the Church. (The Carmelite mystical tradition embodied in the classic text "The Dark Night of the Soul" offers a way to transform despair into hope.) Through the twenties, the Jews were scapegoated for the troubles of Weimar, and when the Nazi movement became apparent some leaders of the Roman Catholic Church rose to oppose it. In 1932, the Fulda Episcopal Conference, representing the Catholic hierarchy of Germany, banned Catholics from joining the Nazi Party. At the church that Edith Stein attended in Münster, where she was on the faculty of a Catholic teachers' college, people wearing swastikas were not permitted to take Communion. But everything changed in 1933. Less than a week after the Enabling Act assured Hitler's dictatorial powers, the Fulda conference lifted the ban on Catholic membership in the Nazi Party. The leader of the conference, Cardinal Adolf Bertram, would surely have been known to Edith Stein because his bishopric included Breslau, her home town, where her mother was still living. (Stein's father had died when she was a young child.) Her mother had been deeply wounded by Edith's conversion, but they remained close, and Edith began to fear that her mother might be in danger and that the local Church would be indifferent to her plight. (Beginning in 1935, Cardinal Bertram sent annual birthday greetings to Adolf Hitler.)



Stein then took her first extraordinary initiative as a Catholic—an act that received little attention in last fall's canonization celebration. Before Easter of 1933, she wrote to Pope Pius XI requesting a private audience to plead for an encyclical condemning Nazi anti-Semitism. That spring—probably while she was waiting for a reply—she was informed that she could no longer keep her position as a teacher, because she was "non-Aryan," although the teachers' college, as a Catholic institution, would not yet have been required to take such a step. Also that spring, Martin Heidegger, who had interviewed and rejected Stein for a philosophy professorship at Freiburg, gave his notorious pro-Nazi speech. Whether or not these events influenced Stein, it was then that she applied for admission to a Carmelite convent in Cologne.

Around this time, Stein received her answer from the Vatican. She was invited to attend a ceremonial audience with the Pope, but she was not to be granted a private audience with him. Uninterested in the honorific, she declined the invitation and received in the mail a document bestowing a papal blessing. Her letter to the Pope is often interpreted as an attempt to get him to influence the Nazis—something that defenders of the papal silence on anti-Semitism assert would have been impossible. But Edith Stein understood that. What she wanted Pius to do was to influence her fellow-Catholics to take a moral stand against the Nazis.

When she received word that the Carmelite order would accept her, she went home to Breslau to prepare her mother for the news of her decision. There she began the work that would occupy her intermittently for the rest of her life: an autobiography entitled

"Life in a Jewish Family." The book, which was published in Germany in 1985, is an affectionate account of the world into which she was born, and it is especially admiring of her mother. She wrote, "Mother is happiest when she is able to do her own sowing and reaping and can give generously to others from the harvest. Doing so she follows faithfully the old Jewish custom that, instead of keeping for oneself the first of each kind of produce one rather gives them away."

We do not know why Stein chose to leave the Jewish faith, but there are reports that she came to see it, in a traditional Christian context, as a guilty faith. Some of her writings reflect a Christian anti-Judaism. Last fall, *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, honored Stein for saying to her sister as the Gestapo took them away to their deaths, "Come, we are going for our people," implying that they died to expiate the sins of what she called an "unbelieving people." (Stein's niece, Susanne Batzdorff, who is Jewish, insists that her aunt's fate was "to die with her people, not for her people.") But whatever her ambivalence toward the Jewish faith there is no question that the events Stein witnessed in her lifetime reinforced her loyalty to the Jewish people. She wrote her autobiography, she said, to oppose the "horrendous caricature" of the Jews that was being promulgated by anti-Semites, in posters, texts, and diatribes. But, in her impulse to resist those anti-Semites, Edith Stein, as a Catholic, was increasingly alone.

EDITH'S mother died in 1936, and her sister Rosa soon also became a Catholic and went to live with her in the convent in Cologne. After Kristallnacht, in 1938, Edith fled to Echt, and Rosa followed her there. (Edith wrote to a friend, "I have often wondered since whether my letter"—to the Pope—"may sometime have come to mind?") On July 6, 1942, Anne Frank's family went into hiding. A week later, a group of Dutch Catholic churchmen sent a telegram to the Nazi authorities denouncing the deportation of Jews. They added a special plea for baptized Jews, which proved to be a mistake, because it put the Nazis in a position to bargain with the Church. They replied that if the clergy ceased its protest baptized Jews would be exempted from deportation. The open arrests and deportation of Jews continued, and the Dutch Catholic bishops could not accept the tacit agreement. They wrote a pastoral letter to the Catholics of the Netherlands which included the text of the telegram, denouncing "the measures already undertaken against Jews" as "contrary to the deepest conviction of the Dutch people and . . . to God's commands of justice and mercy." The Nazi reaction was swift. Two hundred and one Catholic-baptized Jews were promptly arrested, including, on August 2nd, Edith and Rosa Stein.

Years later, a Dutch official who had met Sister Benedicta in a transit camp at Westerbork, in northern Holland, reported that he had asked if he could help her, apparently referring to her obvious status as one of the baptized (she was wearing a full habit). She demurred, saying, "Why should there be an exception made in the case of a particular group? Wasn't it fair that baptism not be allowed to become an advantage?" The point of the story is not, sentimentally, to honor Sister Benedicta for going willingly to her death, especially since there are reports that she took every opportunity in Westerbork to seek the intervention of the Swiss consul. What is notable is that Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross—Edith Stein—rejected the distinction between baptized and non-baptized Jews. And, more important, that she tried to fight Nazism in the only way she knew, via the Church. The Dutch bishops had joined her in that, but few others in the Catholic hierarchy ever did.

The true epiphany of Edith Stein's story is that, in a visceral rejection of Christian theology, she refused to see the Jews as disadvantaged before God. Yet even as her story prompts Christians' repentance for their sins against Jews, it inevitably exacerbates the differences between Christians and Jews. Such contradictions gave shape to the life of Edith Stein. "For now, the world consists of opposites," she was reported to have said en route to Auschwitz. "But in the end none of those contrasts will remain. There will only be the fullness of love. How could it be otherwise?" ♦

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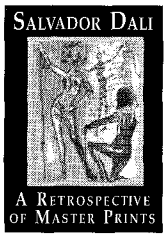
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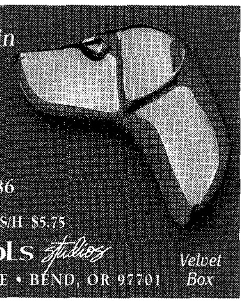

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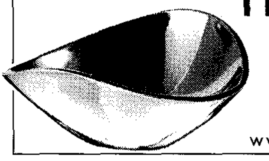

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FERTILE GROUND

Everyone in Bhutan knows that a monk's blessing can help a woman conceive. What will happen to this remote kingdom when Western women know it, too?

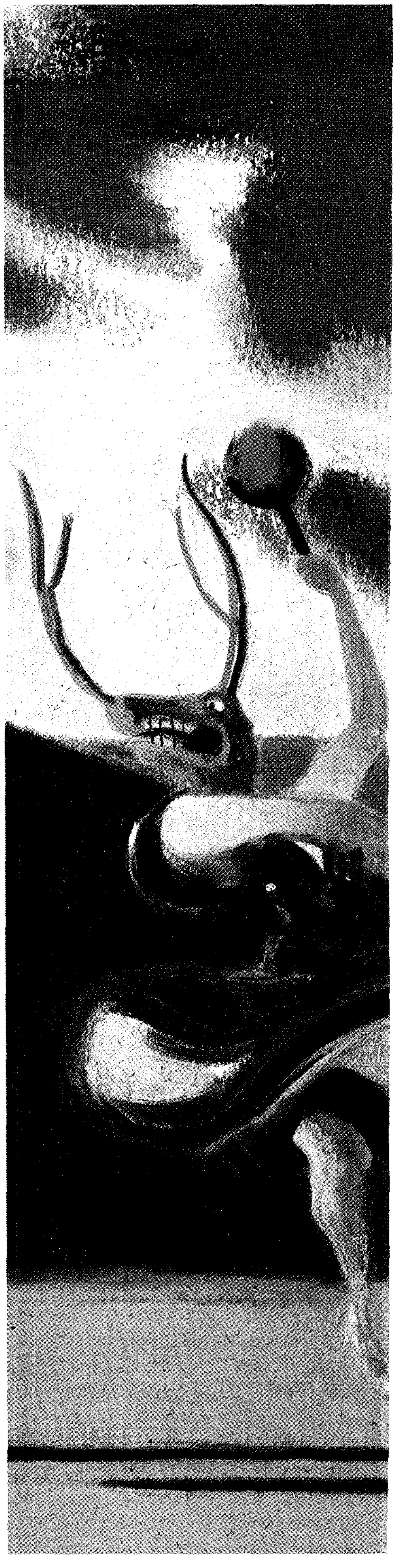
BY SUSAN ORLEAN

THE penises in Bhutan amazed me, there were so many of them. I didn't see them right away when I arrived in the Kingdom of Bhutan's one airport, a narrow drive shaved into the Paro Valley's shaggy green grass. I might not have noticed them, anyway, because I was so woozy from the flight—the scariest one in regularly scheduled commercial aviation, mastered by fewer than a dozen pilots in the world, which requires a right-hand turn at Mt. Everest and then a sort of swooning, tree-trimming slide through the high Himalayas to the airstrip. I was so preoccupied with making landfall that I didn't take note of anything about the airport, really, not even the paintings of curly-tailed dragons and birds, whose beaks are curved like meat hooks, and blue poppies and auspicious Buddhist symbols—conch shells and endless knots and golden fish.

It wasn't until my second day, when I was some distance from the airport, that I first saw the penises. I was driving through a ten-thousand-foot mountain pass called Dochu La when I came to a big farmhouse, broad-hipped and white-walled, with a traditional Tibetan-style beamed roof and a huge wooden doorway twice as tall as anyone who might ever walk through it. In the rocky front yard, a thousand or so chili peppers were spread out to dry in the sun. On either side of the door, someone had painted a huge phallus—peachy-pink, with a matte finish, poised in a salutatory arc with little wisps of whatever curling from the bottom and the top. I happened to be in Bhutan with a group of American women who were hoping to get pregnant by being blessed at Bhutanese fertility ceremonies, so the penises were a big hit—a particularly auspicious symbol for those who were looking for that particular kind of good fortune. The owner of the house stepped out as we were taking photographs. He was a wiry and wind-burned little man, wearing blue knickers, a woven jacket, a red skullcap, and rubber boots. At first, he seemed puzzled by our attention, but after studying us for a moment he nodded knowingly, then arranged himself by the doorway and puffed up with pride for our cameras. Whether it was pride in his house or his red-hot chilies or his fertile mural, we would never know.

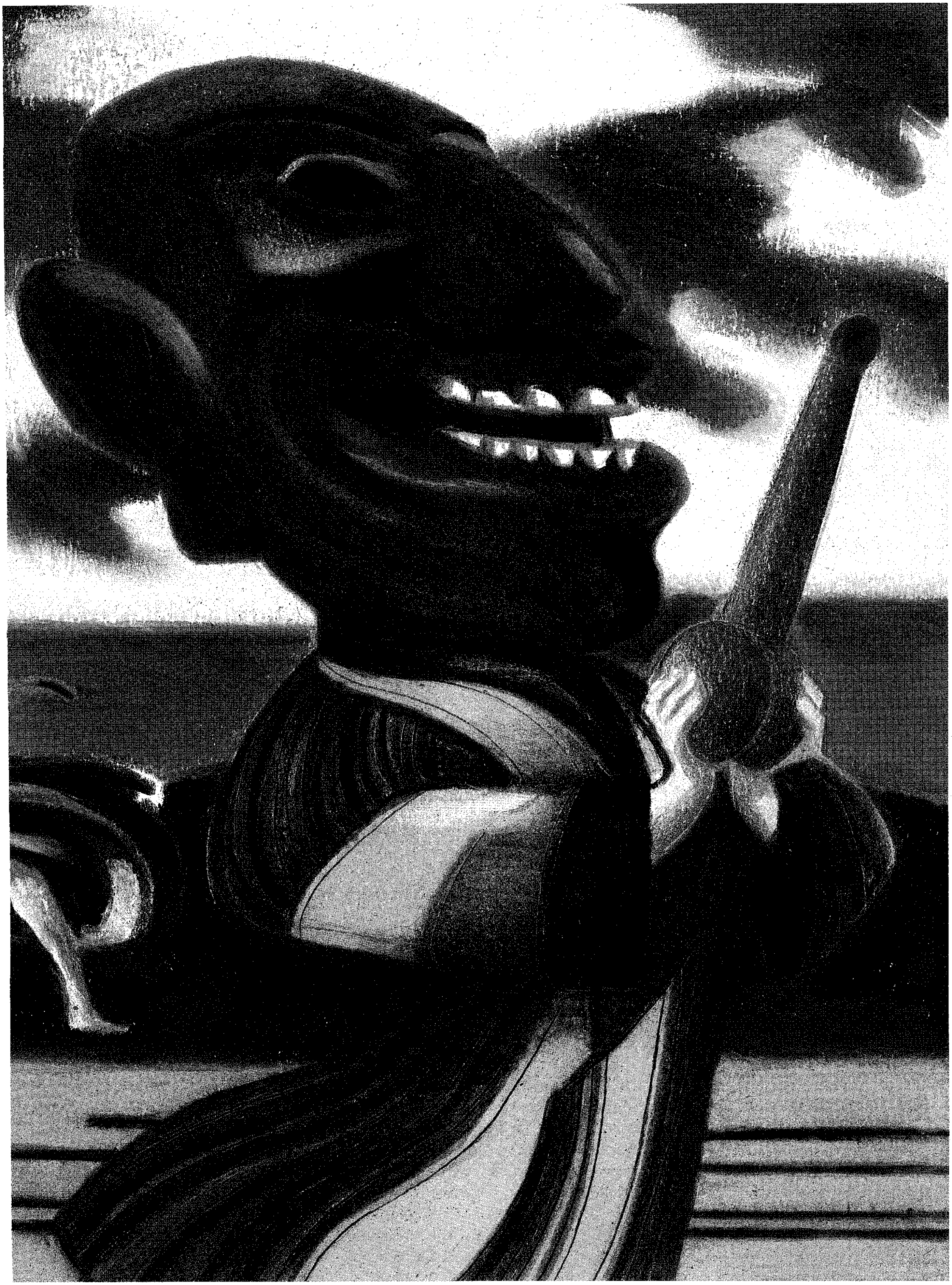
From then on, the penises were everywhere: sketched on houses in Wangduephodrang and in Punakha, on walls in Trongsa, and on a storefront in Jakar, where they were painted above muslin sacks printed with the Bhutanese population-control slogan: "Small Family Happy Family." At the monastery at Chime Lhakhang, which is the most auspicious of auspicious places to be blessed for fertility in Bhutan, the monk performing the ceremony had two penises on the altar. One was of hand-carved ivory, and the other was a piece of wood that was anatomically credible and is said to have grown into its shape naturally in a forest in Tibet, where it was found in the fifteenth century by Drukpa Kunley, the most popular saint in Bhutan.

Eventually, we began seeing penises that weren't really there at all or were only vaguely suggested—the result, I'm sure, of that first, startling, two-pronged annunciation at Dochu La and also of the self-referential nature of the human mind. Any woman trying to get pregnant will swear that everyone she passes on the street is pregnant, just as anyone driving a new red Ford will swear that everyone in the world is driving a red Ford these days. At an im-

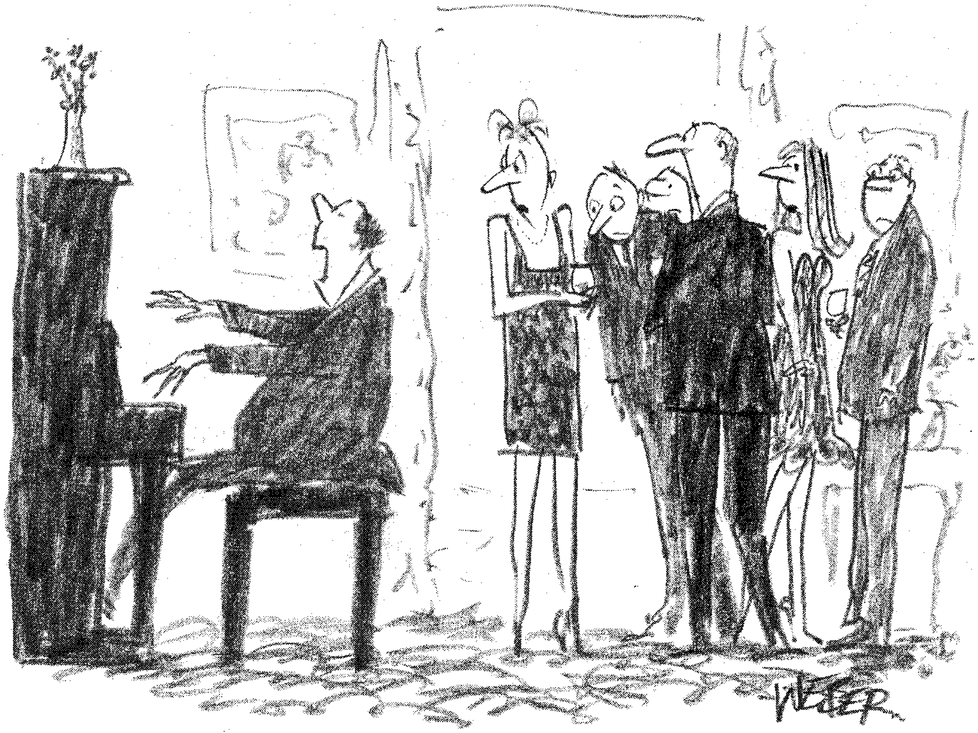


LORENZO MATTOTTI

At the notoriously phallocentric Jak



rtility festival, a masked jester dances onstage with a wooden penis, which he later uses to bless women in the audience.



" 'Over there, over there . . .' "

• •

migration checkpoint on the way to Trongsa, we clambered out of the bus and took a turn around the village. In front of a café, there was a concrete piling or stone column, or something like that—an erect object about knee high and rock hard, which might have insinuated a little of the silhouette, proportion, and character of the male organ. In any case, it was enough insinuation to make it, for this group, exciting. Within a minute, the Americans had gathered around the stone, examined it, discussed it, and shot off a few rolls of film. After the photo session, we killed time by visiting a shop in the village. The proprietor was a stout woman, and she had a half-dozen children of different sizes on her and around her and beside her. A couple of feckless-looking men loitered at the back of the store. We ordered tea and surveyed the place while she heated water on an electric burner. The children were unusually beautiful—dark-haired and dark-eyed, with skin like polished oak. We admired them and made gestures and signs to the woman: Were these her children? Yes, she indicated, all of them were hers. So the stone phallus works? one of our group asked, pointing outside. You have lots of children if you pray to the stone? The woman giggled and shook her head, and soon the men at the back of the store were giggling, too, and then the children started in, and the woman laughed even harder, and the men poked each other in the ribs and howled. It was a riot. When the woman finally caught her breath, she peered over the counter and waved her hands: That stone? No, that has nothing to do with having children. That's where we clean the mud off our shoes.

THERE was a baby at the center of this particular trip—a ten-month-old seventeen-pounder from California, with ash-blond hair and blue-green eyes, named Rachelle (for her maternal great-grandmother, Ruchel, and her paternal great-grandmother, Ruggia) Tashi (at the bidding of the Bhutanese monk who had conjured her) McKellop (her father's last name). For the few weeks we were in Bhutan, she was the most famous baby there. This was because she was the first American baby—actually, the first Western Hemisphere baby—to be born after her mother was blessed, in 1996, at the temple at Chime Lhakhang and the following year at a festival in Jakar. The efficacy of Chime Lhakhang and Jakar for getting people pregnant is old news in Bhutan—nice old news, of course, but not remarkable beyond the usual gladness that attaches to good but unastonishing news, like finding out that you've been approved for a mortgage. It would be bigger news outside Bhutan, because most people have never even heard of the place, and because many people are curious about anything that helps someone get pregnant, and especially because most people don't associate Himalayan Buddhism—austere, solemn, anti-corporeal Himalayan Buddhism—with issues like fecundity and sex.

In Bhutan, the real news was that a Westerner had been blessed. Bhutan wasn't formally opened to tourists until 1974. Even then, the opening was more theoretical than actual. The airport wasn't built until 1983, and the sole Bhutanese airline services only Bangkok and Kathmandu and Delhi, but only on a rotating schedule, and only when the weather in the Paro Valley is flawless, and only during daylight, and only when one of the scary-landing-qualified pilots is scheduled for the trip. You can't just pop over to Bhutan when the spirit moves you. The Bhutanese airline has no competition, and flights are expensive. Tourists have to travel with a licensed guide, and they also have to pay a daily fee, which is now two hundred and forty dollars per person. The fee covers hotel and food costs but is intentionally steep, to discourage the sort of aimless backpackers who tramp through India and Nepal on a nickel and with an open-ended itinerary.

So even though it sits in the gorgeous saddle of the Himalayas and has a charmed and intriguing culture, Bhutan has had few foreign visitors. In 1997, twenty-three years after opening to tourists, Bhutan had a total of only 5,363 tourists. That same year, Nepal had 421,857 visitors. Tourism was viewed by most Bhutanese as an interesting, mildly significant development, but possibly a troublesome one. There was a certain dread of Westerners in hot pants and bush shirts traipsing through the ancient monasteries, and a question of whether they would contribute to the

King's stated goal of increasing Gross National Happiness, rather than Gross National Product.

CHIME LHAKHANG is situated on a round hill above patches of rice fields and a thread of a river, about fifty miles from Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. The temple was built in 1499, after Drukpa Kunley blessed the site. It is fitting that a site hallowed by Drukpa Kunley should be associated with fertility, because he was a hypersexed kook and a libertine. He was born in Tibet in 1455 and was given a traditional ecclesiastical education, but he veered away from it because he considered the Buddhist orthodoxy too stiff. He is said to have drunk a lot, is rumored to have had sex with his mother, to have spoken lines like "My meditation practice is girls and wine / I do whatever I feel like, strolling around in the Void," to have once tied a special "blessing string" around his penis, and to have refused to travel anywhere without his little dog, Shachi. He was an obscene and shocking showoff, but only, it is said, in order to bring attention to himself and, consequently, to Buddhist teachings. People in Bhutan really like him. They refer to him fondly as the Divine Madman. His favorite sport, archery, has been adopted as the Bhutanese national game, and is the kingdom's only entry in the Olympics.

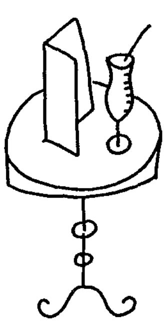
All over Bhutan, there are images of Drukpa Kunley—a chesty man in a predatory crouch with a bad-landlord mustache and wild black eyes, a kind of meat-eating leer on his face, and a little white dog by his side. His disembodied penis—usually a muted pink and energetically arched—is honored in paintings and sculptures and front-yard murals all over the country. Bhutan is a chaste society in which bare legs and shoulders are never seen, eyes are cast down in modesty, affection is never displayed in public, and propriety and simplicity and dignified shyness are cherished. To find the country adorned in such a way was as astounding as it might be if the Amish decided to decorate their barns with enormous breasts.

Chime Lhakhang is popular because of its connection to Drukpa Kunley, and also because it is a beautiful old temple with a broad view of the valley and the spiky mountains beyond. It is one of the few temples in Bhutan whose grounds tourists are allowed to visit, although only people wearing traditional Bhutanese clothing are allowed to approach the altar inside. A few years ago, a Japanese woman stopped at Chime Lhakhang and asked a monk to give her the fertility blessing. The request was unusual, but somehow she prevailed—the first time, as far as anyone could remember, that a non-Bhutanese had been blessed. The woman became pregnant soon afterward. She was sure that it had been due to the Divine Madman, so in appreciation she visits Chime Lhakhang regularly and donates a hundred thousand butter lamps to the fertility festival in Jakar each year. Everyone in the kingdom knew about the Divine Madman's Japanese baby. Actually, in a country with a population of only six hundred thousand everyone always seems to know everything about everything, and in this case everyone talked about the baby because of its novelty, and because of the lifting of the long-standing embargo on foreigners in the sacred rooms of the temple.

THE first Westerners to visit Bhutan were two Portuguese Jesuits, who came in 1627, though not, undoubtedly, on a fertility mission. Quite possibly, they were on a Christian mission, and they almost certainly left disappointed, since Bhutan is fully subscribed to Tantric Mahayana Buddhism, in particular the Drukpa sect of the Kagyupa school. Mahayana Buddhism preaches enlightenment for the welfare of all beings over the search for individual enlightenment; Kagyupa, one of its four major schools, emphasizes intense meditation and the relationship between teacher and disciple. The Drukpa sect is a Bhutanese variety of Kagyupa, which reveres certain favorite local saints like Drukpa Kunley. Bhutan is, in fact, the only sovereign Buddhist kingdom in the world now that the neighboring Buddhist states of Ladakh, Sikkim, and Tibet have been absorbed into India or China. Buddhism was introduced to Bhutan in the seventh century and then revitalized in the eighth century by Guru Rinpoche, the Tantric Buddhist saint whose teachings also galvanized Tibet. Since then, Buddhism has been as elemental as air in Bhutanese life. All ceremonies and most holidays are religious. All art is anonymous and sacred and follows the exacting rules of Buddhist iconography. The legal system is based on seventeenth-century Buddhist moral doctrine. Until 1907, when the absolute monarchy was established, a theocracy ruled the country.

For centuries, Bhutan was more or less left alone, a pinpoint in the eastern Himalayas, encircled by India and Tibet but essentially untouched by them. It is a little country, no bigger than Switzerland—a fretwork of rhododendron stands and pine forests and rice fields and cattle farms. Its southern tier is flat and warm, an extension of the fertile northern Indian plains. From there, the land rises up like an escalator until it reaches the top floor of Tibet. Bananas and oranges grow in the south; in the north, yaks ramble across the snowy mountains. Bhutan's tiny population is not surprising when you consider the ruggedness of the landscape, but it is very surprising when you consider that it is flanked by the two most populous nations on earth.

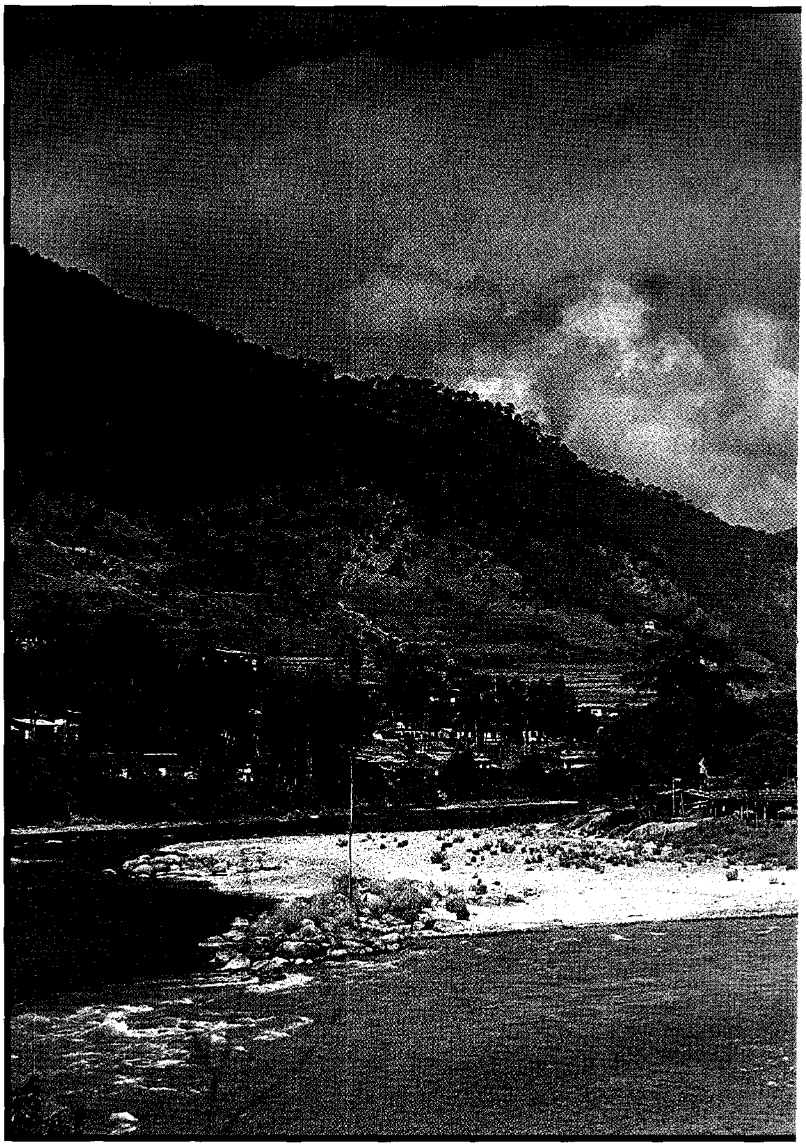
Most of what the Bhutanese need is grown or harvested or handmade locally. Until 1974, the chief source of foreign exchange was the sale of commemorative postage stamps honoring all manner of things: the seventy-fifth anniversary of Boy Scouting, the dogs of Bhutan, the birth of the Royal British Baby, Donald Duck, World Population Year, the Mask Dance of the Judgment of Death. Until 1962, Bhutan had no paved roads, no electricity, no hospitals, no central education system, no newspaper, no television, no modern postal service, no airport, no diplomatic contact with the West, no industry. There are still no stoplights.



When Jawaharlal Nehru visited in 1958, he had to go overland from Delhi. The trip from the Indian border to Thimphu is only a hundred and twenty-seven miles, but it required six days of travel on foot and by mule. In the early fifties, after Tibet was seized by China, King Jigme Dorje Wangchuck began modernizing Bhutan. For one of the first major development projects, the Indian government sent crews to Bhutan on two-year assignments to pave their way through the valleys and hills. When they were done, Bhutan had two thousand miles of new ribbon roads.

The ceremonies of Kagyupa Buddhism are as methodical as knitting. In addition to wearing the traditional dress, supplicants at Chime Lhakhang must bring specific offerings: a kilo of butter, a bottle of locally made wine, cookies, sticks of incense, bags of candy, and a modest amount of money in small denominations. Tovya Wager, the mother of the famous blond baby, did the shopping for the American group. This was Tovya's third trip to Bhutan. The first, three years earlier, was a reconnaissance mission for her travel company, which specializes in adventure vacations in Asia and was considering adding Bhutan to its roster. Around the same time, Tovya and her husband, Harry, had been trying to have a baby. Tovya has blond hair and watery green eyes and dainty features and the strong back of a baggage handler. At the time of her first trip to Bhutan, she was forty-four years old and had travelled everywhere in the world. Her sentences often begin with phrases like "The first time I was in a lean-to in northern Laos" and "When I was staying with former headhunters in Borneo." She was an old hand at infertility treatments and had grown so discouraged that she had applied to adopt a baby from China. She was not, however, thinking about babies when she went to Bhutan. It was really just happenstance—a Bhutanese friend who knew that Tovya wanted a child introduced her to Pem Dorji, then the governor of the Bumthang district, and he offered to petition the clergy at Chime Lhakhang, using the blessing of the Japanese woman as a precedent. I met the Governor when Tovya went to his house to introduce Rachelle. As he was giving her his baby gifts—a roll of cloth and a prayer scarf—he recalled his work on behalf of Tovya's fertility. Our visit took place moments after he had finished a meeting with the Indian Ambassador and right before he began work on a speech celebrating Bhutan's rare black-necked crane. I mentioned that this lineup of tasks—conception, international politics, birds—seemed interesting. "I have a lot of responsibilities," he said in formal, British-inflected English. "Being a governor in Bhutan is an all-around job."

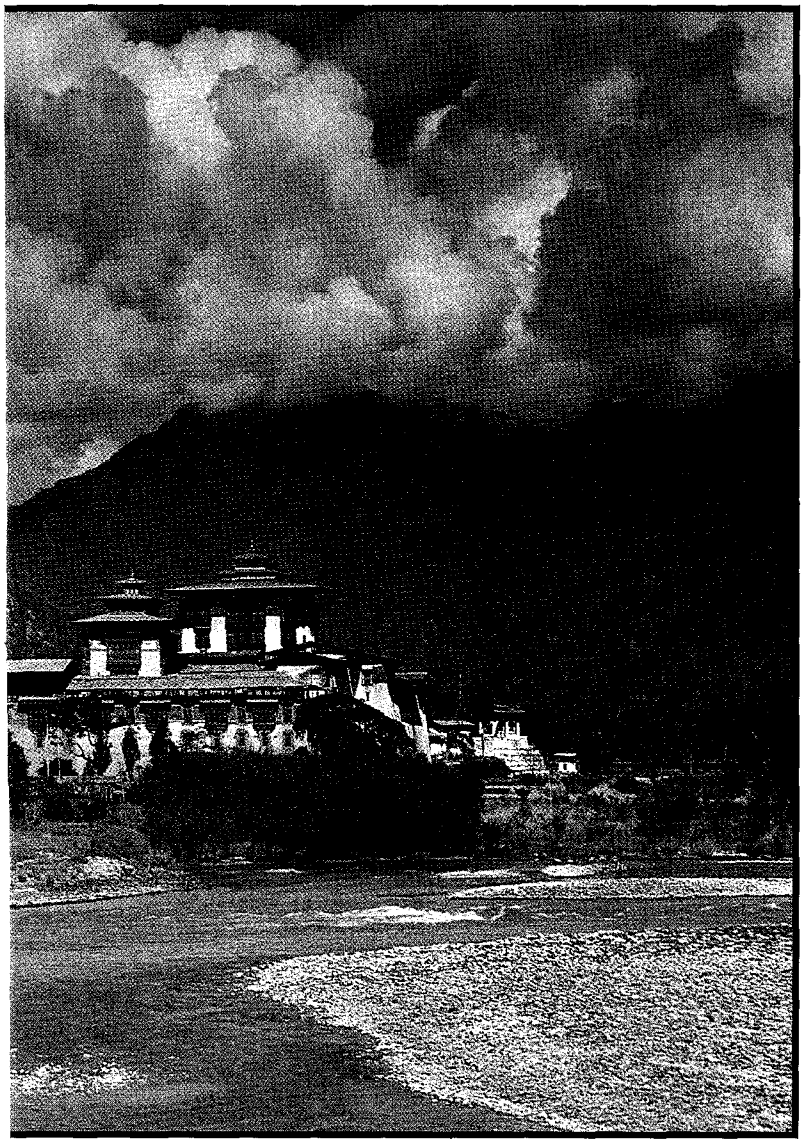
Tovya didn't get pregnant after her first blessing, so she put it out of her mind and continued to work on a Chinese adoption. A year later, she needed to return to Bhutan on business. This time, both Governor Pem Dorji and her friend urged her to get a fertility blessing at Jampa Lhakhang Drub, an annual festival in the town of Jakar. By then, Tovya was forty-six. She was blessed at the festival in Jakar, and went home without any great expectations. Four months later, she was pregnant. When she found out, she faxed her friend and Governor Pem Dorji and promised to bring the baby to Bhutan as soon as she could.



To reach many of Bhutan's most sacred sites, like the monastery above, travellers m

CONRAD PIEPENBURG/LAIF

So this was originally just a presentation trip, a chance for Tovya to display the baby to the monks, the governor, the Jakar festival organizers, and everyone else who had bestowed their blessings on her. Then she began to wonder whether she could bring other Americans to Chime Lhakhang and Jakar. The Governor and the festival organizers said she could, even though the idea of childless Americans flooding the holy sites of Bhutan was not perfectly in keeping with Gross National Happiness goals. Tovya advertised the trip in travel magazines as "Fertility Blessing: Spiritual Bhutan," but the fine print noted that you were not required to be seeking fertility as a condition of travel ("Don't worry, you can just observe—not be blessed if having a child is not what you are seeking"), and most of the people in the group—a retired schoolteacher, a couple in their sixties from Washington, an unattached lawyer, and Tovya's mother and husband—were just observing, not trying to conceive. The wishful thinkers were two couples from California, professionals in their forties. The women had tried and failed to become pregnant by other, conventional and technological means. One of them—I'll call her Ellen—was a lawyer turned artist, and her husband was a lawyer turned actor. The other woman, whom I'll call Dina, ran a business in Los Angeles; her husband managed a restaurant. Both couples were fed up with science, having had no luck with anything, from hormone treatments to gamete transfers. Ellen hadn't even been planning to go to Bhutan; she had contacted Tovya with some questions about China, but once she mentioned her efforts to get pregnant and Tovya mentioned Rachelle, she felt that the trip was fated. Dina, who had miscarried several times, was skeptical but hopeful. "Anything that keeps me hopeful has got to help," she explained. "You need to feel hopeful somehow."



k through a country so rugged that it didn't have paved roads or electricity until 1962.

We drove to Chime Lhakhang on the twisting Indian-built roads, along the edges of the high hills and the rims of the riverbanks, in the shade of bamboo stands and under the shadow of Gangkar Punsum, the tallest unconquered mountain in the world. White farmhouses bunched together in the valleys like sheep. Once in a while, we noticed a house high up on a mountainside which had no visible means of support or access—or, for that matter, method of construction. It was as if it had been launched up to its perch by a rocket. Most of the oncoming traffic was baggy-kneed cattle. Golden langur monkeys—lucky creatures, in Bhutanese custom—loafed by the side of the road. An old woman appeared around a foggy bend herding a dozen piebald goats and walking a good-luck pig on a leash. Almost every mountain pass and every bridge and every curve in the road bristled with prayer flags that whipped and snapped in the wind. In a schoolyard near the National Mushroom Centre, kids on recess lurched around on stilts. Next to the school was the Family Planning Centre and the turnoff to Chime Lhakhang. An hour later, we were there.

The temple is a mile and a half off the road, so we parked as close as we could, beside a handful of houses, and set out. A group of Nepalese watched us coolly as we walked by. Bhutan and Nepal are uneasy neighbors. Nepal is Hindu, and has laid itself open to tourism, becoming a motley way station in the Himalayas. Almost no Bhutanese leave the country; Nepali emigration, by contrast, is constant, and so many Nepalese have settled in Bhutan that they make up almost a quarter of the country's population. In the eighties, Bhutan became aggressively nationalistic in an effort to preserve its cultural identity: Nepali ceased to be a language of instruction and Dzongkha was mandated in addition to English; the prohibition against television was strengthened; and, in public, citizens were obliged to wear traditional Bhutanese dress (handwoven knee-length robes, or *gos*, for men, and ankle-length jumpers called *kiras* for women). During this time, many illegal Nepalese immigrants departed, and tens of thousands more who had lived in Bhutan for decades were encouraged to leave—or forced to leave, according to human-rights groups.

We passed farmhouses decorated with penis paintings, where old men sat playing checkers, and a few spotted dogs were chewing their nails, and then we crossed onto the terraced fields. It was a bright, cold day, and the puddles in the fields were milky with frost. A woman in a striped *kira* stood amid hairy haystacks, separating wheat from chaff. The temple was visible from a mile away. Its walls were white and bare, as if they had been scoured; against the green fields and the green hills, it looked like a cue ball on a pool table. At the gate of the temple, a young monk, perhaps ten years old, met us and led us the rest of the way—up the side of a hill and around a column containing religious offerings, which was called a chorten. To insure good fortune, we circled around the chorten clockwise. Then we filed through the courtyard of the temple, where a few dozen monks in burgundy robes stood watching us. The wall behind them was covered with an enormous painting of the Divine Madman, who was portrayed as a sort of unstoppable galloping force, in rich reds and cobalt and gilt. In an alcove stood a prayer wheel as big as a cement mixer—hundreds of prayers had been handwritten on cloth and then stuffed inside a wooden cylinder; spinning the wheel sends all its wrapped prayers to Heaven on your behalf.

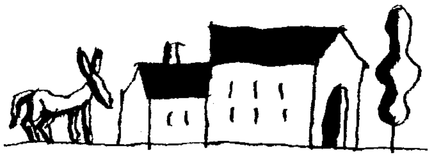
At last we got to the guts of the place, the dim, sweet-smelling altar room, where there was a towering statue of Drukpa Kunley draped with flower necklaces and jewelry and surrounded by urns and candles and tiny golden jars. The young monk stepped aside for the senior monk, who would perform the ceremony. He was a big, quiet man with an egg-shaped head and an egg-shaped body and a grave, steady gaze. First, he blessed Tovya's baby, then he motioned the group to draw together. Ellen placed butter, Krackjack Biscuits, Pizza Flavor Chicken Brand Chips, and candy at the foot of the statue of Drukpa Kunley; in the low light, I could make out other packages of biscuits and chips, which had been left earlier in the day. The rest of the ceremony was sort of a dream—a tap on the head with Drukpa Kunley's fifteenth-century archery set, a drink of holy water, a tap with the ivory penis and another with the wooden one. The monk spoke in a low, flowing voice and in a sinking sigh, something that sounded achingly sad and kind and went on for a long time. Dice were thrown to get lucky numbers for the women; then names for the predestined babies were drawn from a tiny, ancient deck of name cards; and, as soon as it was over, everyone started to cry.

"I don't know why I'm crying," Ellen said. She and Dina embraced. "I'm going to have a girl," Ellen went on. "I know it." Dina nodded, and dried her eyes on her sleeve.

"A little Bhutanese girl," Ellen said. "A little divine madwoman." We walked back through the farm fields by moonlight. Some children from the village, singing a warped, Bhutanese version of "Happy Birthday," serenaded us all the way.

THERE was an advertisement for a vasectomy clinic ("No Incision, No Stitch, Walk Home in Ten Minutes!") behind the front desk of our hotel in Punakha, and a desolate family-planning booth in Jakar—the government is trying to reduce Bhutan's overly vigorous birth rate to two per cent within the next five years—but otherwise we kept seeing fertility symbols everywhere we went. Plus we couldn't stop talking about babies: the marvel of Tovya's conception; complaints from those who had received hormone injections; the delivery sagas of the three women on the trip who had had children decades ago. Perhaps because we were so far from home, in a place as unusual as Bhutan, we didn't notice how odd it was to discuss episiotomies and sperm motility with a group of relative strangers.

The festival in Jakar, our stop after Chime Lhakhang, is notoriously phallocentric, and Tovya wanted to have the group blessed there, because she believed that it had made the difference between her first, disappointing trip to Bhutan and her second, fruitful one. Jakar is a dot of a town in the Bumthang district of central Bhutan, a gold-green valley of rice terraces bordered by the Black Mountains and the wall of the Himalayan foothills. The festival was held on a flat, dusty lawn beside an old stone temple. A small stage had been erected for dignitaries at one end and a shade tent set up on the other. When we arrived, the current governor of Bumthang, Jigme Zangpo, and several of his assistants were already seated on the stage, snacking on cracked corn and cookies, watching the huge crowd that had formed on the perimeters of the lawn. Everyone was dressed in Bhutanese clothing made of bright woven material of claret red and deep blue and piney green and yellow, in a scramble of patterns—glen plaids, rep stripes, geometric rickrack—and in the full, sharp mountain light they looked lucent, jewelled. Now and again, you might see a pair of Nikes or a Yankees baseball cap, or a Tommy Hilfiger T-shirt peeking out of a robe, but otherwise it was a vision without reference to time or place or to any world outside this one.



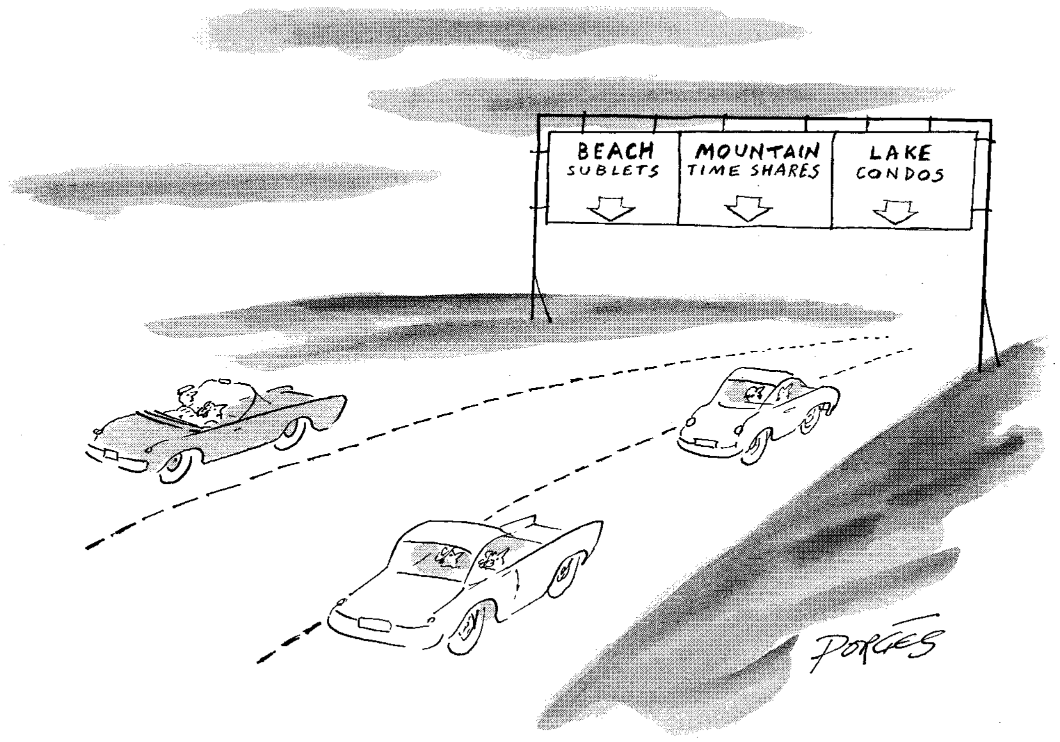
The Governor's assistant noticed Tovya and the baby across the lawn and motioned for us to join the group onstage. He reached for the baby and said, "I knew it. The spiritual leader of our festival is very auspicious. We are very happy to see our successful outcome."

The Governor leaned over to tickle the baby. He was a portly, handsome man with a walrus mustache and a Caesar haircut. I asked him whether he was prepared for Bumthang to become a mecca for reproduction if word of Tovya's success circulated. He tilted his head and thought for a few moments. On the lawn, the festival dancing had begun. The jester, the *atsara*, was sashaying around, swinging a wooden phallus. He wore a red wooden clown mask and a long robe that looked as old as time. Behind him, four dwarfs in puffy skirts and two dancers dressed as cows feinted and boxed. A pregnant dog with swollen ankles wandered onto the lawn, made a few tight circles, and then lay down and took a nap.

"It would be nice if many Americans came for the festival," the Governor said. "I'm proud to say we can host two hundred and fifty-six tourists at a time in Bumthang. We don't have any limits, but we would want only as many as we are capable of accommodating. The festival has always been a neat family event. If there are too many outsiders, the family feeling isn't there."

Does the ritual work?

"You have to have inner respect for it, but it will work if you have any type of devotion," he said. On the lawn, two clowns had captured the *atsara;* a monk dressed as a tree stole the wooden penis from him and then raced around wav-



ing it at the crowd. The children in the audience clapped and screamed.

The Governor turned to Tovya and asked, “Did you have an easy delivery? It’s often risky to have a baby at your age.”

She dandled the baby on her knee. “Very easy,” she said. “And I felt great throughout the pregnancy.”

“Maybe it was your faith,” the Governor said. “Some things are simply beyond science.” He leaned over and cooed to the baby, “*Taa-shi! Taa-shi!*” The baby squeezed his nose and then began chewing on one of Tovya’s credit cards. “Does she take up most of your time? Or do you have a nanny?” the Governor asked. He adjusted his prayer shawl on his shoulder and shifted his ceremonial sword around his waist. An old man spinning a squeaky prayer wheel rambled across the stage, dipping respectfully toward the dignitaries. The clowns had released the *atsara*, and the fertility-blessing ceremony was about to begin. We were each handed a penis of stone or wood and lined up so the *atsara* could drip water from his phallus onto our heads. As we left, the Governor shook hands with us and whispered, “I know you’ll be back with your tiny tots someday.”

ONE of the most sacred days in the Bhutanese calendar is Lhabab Duechhen, the day Buddha is believed to have descended from Heaven; this year, it happened to fall on the day we were heading back to Thimphu—and would be driving past Chime Lhakhang again. To visit Chime Lhakhang on Lhabab Duechhen is to be overdetermined, luckwise—sort of a providential belt and suspenders. So of course we stopped again, leaving the car in the same spot in the tumbledown village, tramping again across the broad, wet meadow and up the round hill to the Divine Madman’s temple. The young monk again met us at the gate of the temple, and we climbed to the top of the hill along with a score of other people, all Bhutanese, who were there on account of its being an especially lucky day. Many of them were kids praying for good grades on their upcoming exams, but the rest were young women—dark-haired, slim, sombre in their brilliant *kiras*—who had come to ask Drukpa Kunley for help in having children. It was, just then, a particularly propitious moment in the history of the Kingdom of Bhutan. The King was about to celebrate his forty-third birthday, and he and his four wives—four sisters from a prominent Bhutanese family—were travelling around the country in their royal-blue Land Cruisers, dropping in at local birthday events. Also, the only remaining district in Bhutan that was without telephones had at last been connected; the phones were being turned on that day. The weather was especially fine, too—cold enough to suggest that winter would be coming, but so sunny that it was impossible to believe it would be anything other than a favorable day. We hadn’t had a chance to do any grocery shopping, so we didn’t have cookies and candy and butter and wine, and we wondered whether we would be welcomed in the temple on such a holy day. The monk who blessed us the last time came to the door and saw that we were empty-handed, but he made it clear that he remembered us and waved us in anyway.

I went back to Bhutan a few months later, to take another look around. Right away, I recognized people I had met on my first trip, and they recognized me. “You were here with the American baby,” a lot of them said to me, and then asked, “What happened to the women who came to Chime Lhakhang and the festival at Jakar?” I told them what I knew. Dina had become pregnant a few weeks after getting home but then had miscarried. Ellen was working with a healer and a nutritionist but so far hadn’t had any luck. Tovya had decided to spend more time with Rachelle Tashi and less time on the road, although she had organized another group to come for the fertility blessings in the fall.

At the time, though, it was still spring: the rhododendrons were blooming, and the mist in the Paro Valley was as thick as goosedown. The airport was blanked out, invisible. For days, no planes could come in or out of the country. It was as if Bhutan had once more withdrawn from the rest of the world. Anyone planning to travel to the country was turned back. Those who were already on their way when the airport disappeared were billeted in crummy airport hotels in Kathmandu and Calcutta until the mist cleared and planes could find Bhutan again. ♦

PROFILE

THE POLITICAL SCIENTIST

Harold Varmus has ambitious plans for the future of medicine. But can he get Congress to support the most controversial and promising research in medical history?

BY JAMES FALLOWS

THE Clinton Administration has been short on political skill of the old-fashioned, behind-the-scenes variety—the kind of influence that is so effective no one sees it being used. The closest approximations have been the efforts of Alan Greenspan and Robert Rubin, the financial administrators who have presided over the record stock-market boom, but their power is widely recognized. That is decidedly not the case with Harold Varmus, who has been the director of the National Institutes of Health for the past six years, and who, improbably, may be the most effective backstairs politician the Clinton Administration has produced.

The N.I.H. is a federal agency that employs thirteen thousand scientists, encompasses twenty-five institutes and centers, and is the leading source of funding for biomedical research in the United States—and, therefore, the world. When Varmus was appointed, in 1993, he had neither political nor administrative experience. He had spent the previous twenty years as an increasingly celebrated medical researcher, whose efforts were concentrated mainly in his own lab, and in 1989 he had shared the Nobel Prize with Michael Bishop for his findings on cancer-causing genes. Since going to the N.I.H., however, Varmus has achieved a series of political victories that will affect scientific policy for many years to come and, at least by implication, may change the entire understanding of health, disease, and the limits of the human life span.

The N.I.H. has become one of the rare government institutions that politicians of both parties actively praise. When Varmus became the director, the N.I.H. had just reduced the number of research grants it offered, because of the federal deficit. Since then, the N.I.H.'s budget has grown more substantially than almost any other category of federal spending. Its annual budget was just under eleven billion dollars when Varmus arrived. Now it is almost sixteen billion dollars. This past February, when the Clinton Administration requested only a token increase for the year ahead, members of Congress from both parties criticized the request as shortsighted. Senator Arlen Specter, of Pennsylvania, a Republican who chairs the committee that considers budgets for spending on health, education, and social welfare, said that the Administration seemed not to appreciate the value of what was under way at the N.I.H. Having heard Varmus testify about his plans for the agency, Specter and his colleagues want to add two billion dollars to what the Administration has requested.

Varmus has also enjoyed subtler victories, which to many of his colleagues matter at least as much as the increased funding. He has managed to sustain political support for medical research without endorsing science's version of pork-barrel spending—grants earmarked for crusades against high-profile diseases, like prostate and breast cancer, where the scientific basis for an immediate cure is slim. Though his background could not be more different from that of the typical politician, he has successfully made the case to politicians for long-term investment in the kind of science that he believes represents the hope for truly revolutionary advances in medicine.

Varmus extolls a commitment to basic science, which emphasizes grappling with the fundamentals of nature, such as how a particular gene functions or when and why a cell dies. Scientists who begin this kind of work, he says, can never be sure where it will lead, or how important their work will turn out to be: often the results that prove most valuable are not the ones that the scientists expected to discover. Varmus is keenly aware that a governmental commitment to invest ever-larger amounts of money in such unplannable, long-term research violates the basic principles of politics. But he has relentlessly argued for its importance in a stream of speeches, appearances at congressional hearings, and informal meetings with politicians—and many senators and representatives now express the concept as if it were their own.

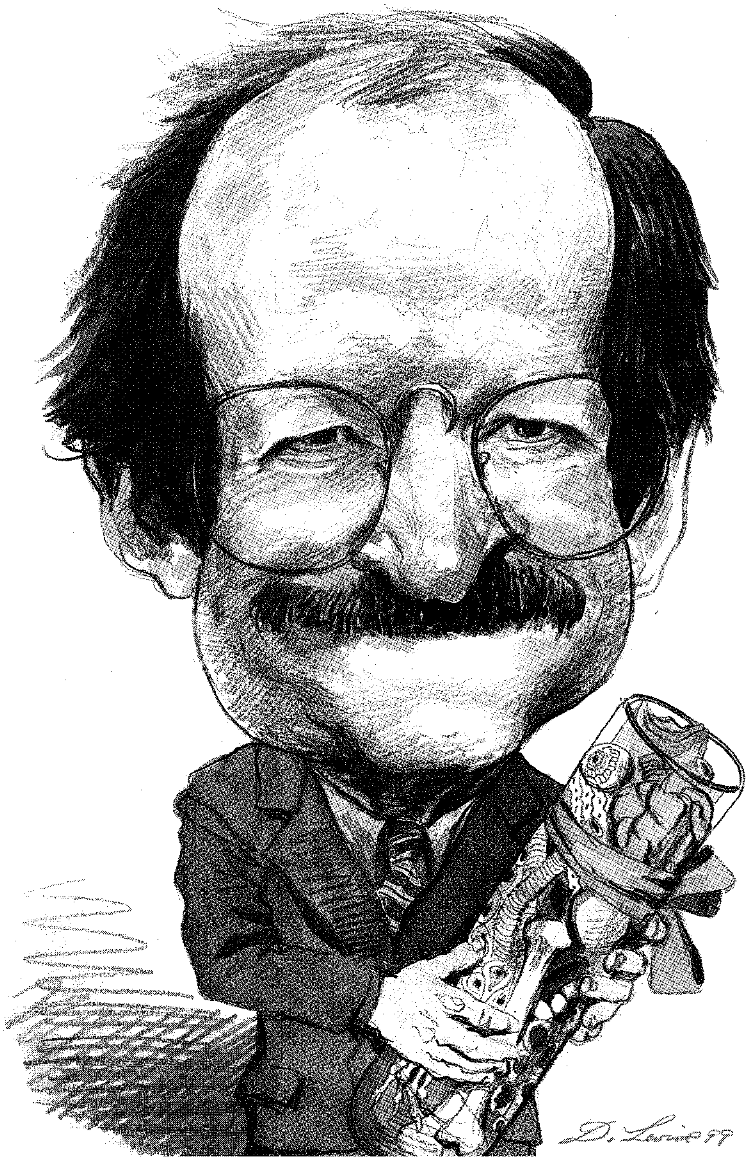
Varmus's advocacy comes at a time when the secrets of biology, principally in the area of genetics, are being revealed at an unprecedented rate, and many say that his presence at the N.I.H. is a historic match of person and opportunity. "In general in public life, appointing one individual doesn't make a huge difference," Donna Shalala, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, who recruited Varmus for his present job, said recently. "But this appointment was absolutely crucial. It may turn out to be the most important legacy of the Clinton Administration."

DESPITE political recognition of Varmus's importance, to the public he is unknown. At last year's State of the Union address, Varmus was given the seat of honor—next to Hillary Clinton, in the balcony. The cameras turned to him as the President proposed a dramatic increase in funding for the N.I.H., but not one viewer in a thousand was likely to recognize him. In 1996, when Varmus gave the commencement address at Harvard, the *Crimson* was full of mockery about this nobody who had been invited to speak. And last autumn, as I followed Varmus through Washington I never saw a single head turn for a "Hey, it's him!" political-celebrity look.

In person, Varmus is a lean, energetic, and intense presence. Although he will turn sixty late this year, from ten paces he looks forty-five. He is just over six feet tall, with strongly muscled legs from decades of serious bicycle riding, and he can seem as loosely hinged as a teen-ager—slouching in a chair during a meeting, jiggling coins in his pocket when he stands. He speaks rapidly, with the precision of a scientist, but often also with a bemused smile and a string of dry wisecracks.

When Varmus must appear before Congress or make a formal presentation, he is nattily outfitted, at his wife's direction, but the rest of the time he is informally dressed, in frayed khakis and open-necked shirts. He rarely wears a tie, and appears generally oblivious of his appearance. One gray Saturday morning, when he walked into a coffee shop in Cleveland Park wearing ratty cold-weather biking gear, the other customers seemed momentarily unsure whether he was an athlete or a bum.

It would be astonishing if a man so accomplished in his field were free of vanity, and Varmus is not. With his scientific eminence taken for granted (this is the importance of what he refers to as "the Prize," not needing to specify), he makes sure that people know of his other accomplishments—that he is an outdoorsman, that he has done graduate work in English literature. At scientific conferences, he is the one toting around the fat, obscure European novel. He is also very proud of the fact that he bikes to work twelve miles uphill every morning. (In 1993, Joe Palca, of NPR, biked to the N.I.H. with Varmus and recorded an interview with him en route. Then Palca went back to the studio and rerecorded his questions from the comfort of a chair: on the air, the public heard a panting N.I.H. director and an easy-breathing reporter. Varmus is still grumbling about this injustice.)



Clinton's greatest legacy may be Varmus's construction of a medical-industrial complex.

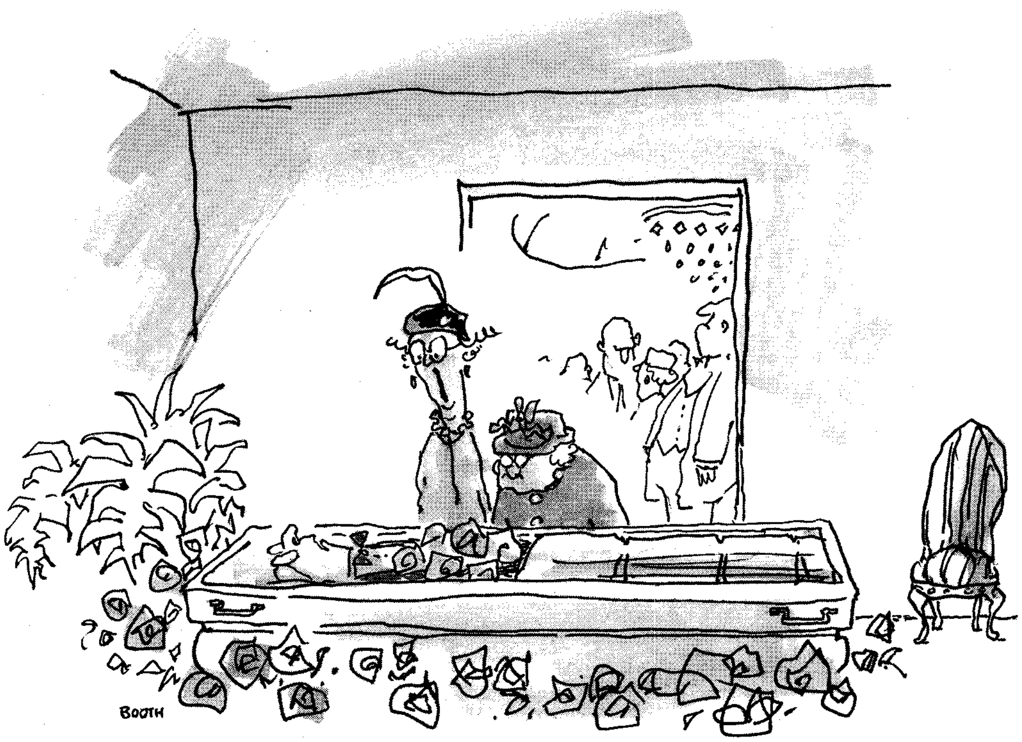
DAVID LEVINE

Yet since taking office Varmus has stuck to the Washington version of modesty, which is to recognize how much more influential you can be if not everyone is aware of your influence. By local standards, he is self-effacing. His office walls are covered with museum posters, not with photographs of him receiving awards, and he is cannily reticent about his accomplishments; indeed, he seems to appreciate rather than resent his ability to slip unnoticed into a crowd. Like Ronald Reagan, whom he resembles in no other way, Varmus seems totally relaxed in his public role, enjoying the enormously complicated process he oversees daily.

Nevertheless, he is known to feel that he has "at least one more good job" in him, and many of his colleagues assume that he is nearing the end of his tenure at the N.I.H. Each time a prominent foundation position or university presidency or pharmaceutical-industry chairmanship opens up, rumors proliferate that this will be the opportunity to lure him away: he will succeed Harold Shapiro as president of Princeton; he will head the Howard Hughes Medical Institute or—the most recent and persistent gossip—Sloan-Kettering. Varmus dismisses these rumors. Shortly before going to the N.I.H., he wrote an article suggesting that its directors should have six-year terms rather than indefinite appointments. "After about two years here, I realized that people were *counting*," he told me, sounding amused. "So I started saying, 'Around six years.' Could be five years. Could be eight!"

The natural winding down of his time at the N.I.H. coincides with the most potentially explosive issue of his tenure: whether the government will support research using stem cells. This research offers enormous therapeutic possibilities, but the right-to-life movement considers it indefensible because the cells come from embryos and fetuses. The final test of Varmus's stewardship may be whether he has the skill and the commitment to steer the N.I.H. through this controversy with his customary finesse.

THE N.I.H. began in 1887 as a one-room Laboratory of Hygiene, on Staten Island. Today, its institutes and buildings barely fit into a three-hundred-



"Beuford was too old for a sexual frenzy."

and-twenty-two-acre "campus" in Bethesda, Maryland, northwest of Washington, D.C. Its modern history started in 1937, when Congress voted to establish the National Cancer Institute, the first and still the most generously funded of the N.I.H. institutes. In 1940, President Franklin Roosevelt came to Bethesda to dedicate the new campus. He gave a speech that portrayed medical research as part of the national-mobilization effort, which was then much on his mind. "The defense this nation seeks involves a great deal more than building airplanes, ships, guns, and bombs," he said. "We cannot be a strong nation unless we are a healthy nation. And so we must recruit not only men and materials but also knowledge and science in the service of national strength."

Since that time, two major campaigns to marshal "science in the service of national strength" have illuminated the successes and shortcomings of this approach to disease. One of the efforts was the campaign to develop a polio vaccine—in retrospect, a challenge ideally tailored for the big-science mentality that prevailed after the Manhattan Project. The enemy, in the form of a single virus, was known. Varmus told me that last fall he watched a PBS documentary about polio. "It was a pretty clear reminder of how much simpler things were in the fifties, when everyone was focussed on one disease," he said. "And it was the right disease to focus on, because it was one we had the tools to combat. It was incredibly successful. Even though the N.I.H. was not directly in charge of it"—the agency experienced its exponential growth after the campaign—"in a sense we've inherited the mantle of responsibility to do what we did for polio for every other disease."

The other crusade—a failed effort—suggested how difficult it was to do for other diseases "what we did for polio." In 1971, Richard Nixon asked Congress for a hundred million dollars "to launch an intensive campaign to find a cure for cancer." Congress hardly needed to be asked; in the previous year, it had passed a King Canute-style resolution, endorsing total victory over cancer by 1976 "as an appropriate commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the independence of our country." Nixon referred to this freely as his "war on cancer," and it fared roughly as well as his war in Vietnam. After three decades and an investment of more than thirty-five billion dollars in cancer research, annual cancer deaths have increased.

To scientists, the different outcomes of these two campaigns are completely comprehensible. Polio is one disease, and its fundamental mechanisms were understood by the time vaccines were tested and distributed. Cancer takes countless forms, and those variations are related only by the fact that in all cases the mechanisms that normally limit a cell's growth have broken down, permitting uncontrolled spread of the disease. More money always means more research, but even huge injections of money during Nixon's war would not necessarily have saved lives, since so much of the science of cancer was yet to be unveiled. "The polio solution was a complete solution," Varmus told me, "whereas the cancer solution is likely to be incremental."

Even now, though, the memory of victory over polio affects the political environment of the N.I.H. Most senators and representatives are middle-aged men, and they are worried about their hearts, their memories, their prostates. Their wives are worried about breast cancer. Analyses of funding patterns for the N.I.H. over the decades show that politicians frequently support additional investments in research on a particular disease after a grandchild or a spouse has contracted it. Their efforts are paralleled, in a more organized way, by a large network of health-advocacy groups, recommending higher budgets to seek cures for conditions like Parkinson's, AIDS, diabetes, and spinal-cord injuries, among others. The advocacy networks might seem to be an N.I.H. director's most important allies, and, in a sense, they are; Harold Varmus regularly appears before the groups to thank them for their support. But, understandably, many of the groups are seeking dramatic, specific results in order to save people who are sick right now, and that is precisely what long-term, basic research cannot deliver on demand.

IN the early nineteen-nineties, the N.I.H. was at a low point in its institutional cycle of ups and downs. In 1991, Bush appointed Bernadine Healy, a prominent cardiologist from Cleveland who had served as a science and technology adviser in the Reagan White House, as the N.I.H. director. Healy announced that her primary goal would be a strategic streamlining of the organization, which was by then a nine-billion-dollar-per-year operation. Her critics in academia and at the N.I.H. resisted her initiative, as an unwise centralized attempt to "plan" science.

Healy's era was marked by a series of internal disputes that made the N.I.H. seem as much a political as a scientific organization. Scientists at the N.I.H. and around the world were just beginning to decipher the chemical sequences that define human genes. Healy argued that investigators should be able to claim patents on the genes as soon as they had identified a coherent gene sequence but before they had any idea what the gene actually did; she believed that granting property rights would spur innovation.

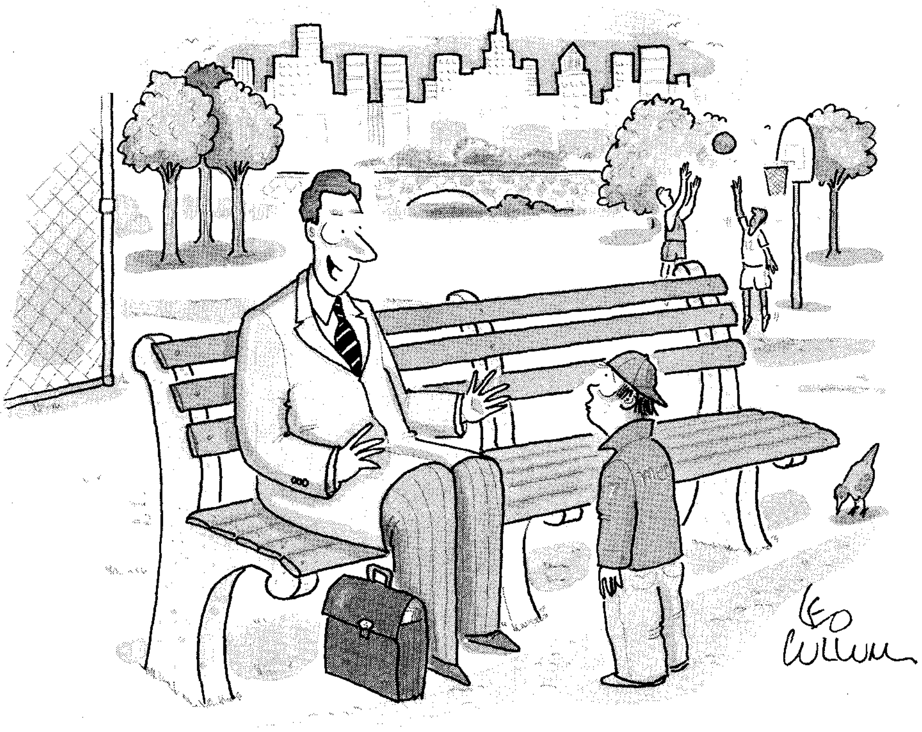
James Watson, the co-discoverer of the DNA helix, was then working at the N.I.H., as the head of the Human Genome Project. He disagreed with Healy on a variety of topics, and especially on gene patenting. Like a majority of research scientists, Watson argued that genetic information should remain public—that granting permission for gene patents was the equivalent of letting companies patent the periodic table of the elements. Early in Healy's term, Watson resigned. Healy also lobbied Congress for a six-hundred-and-twenty-five-million-dollar targeted-research project on women's health problems. Critics contended that this was political showboating rather than a sensible allocation of funds.

When the Clinton Administration arrived, it found that bright young researchers and prominent senior scientists were joining the staffs of universities and hospitals rather than considering a career at the N.I.H. "We all felt the politicization and a 'strategic planning' that seemed to be disconnected from how we felt about science," the current director of the National Cancer Institute, Richard Klausner, told me. "There was this tremendous lack of identification and a lack of rejuvenation of this whole institution at its core." It was more or less at that point that Donna Shalala, then newly confirmed as the Secretary of Health and Human Services, became convinced that the N.I.H. needed "a world-class scientist who could exemplify scientific excellence," and she recruited a man with almost no bureaucratic experience for the job.

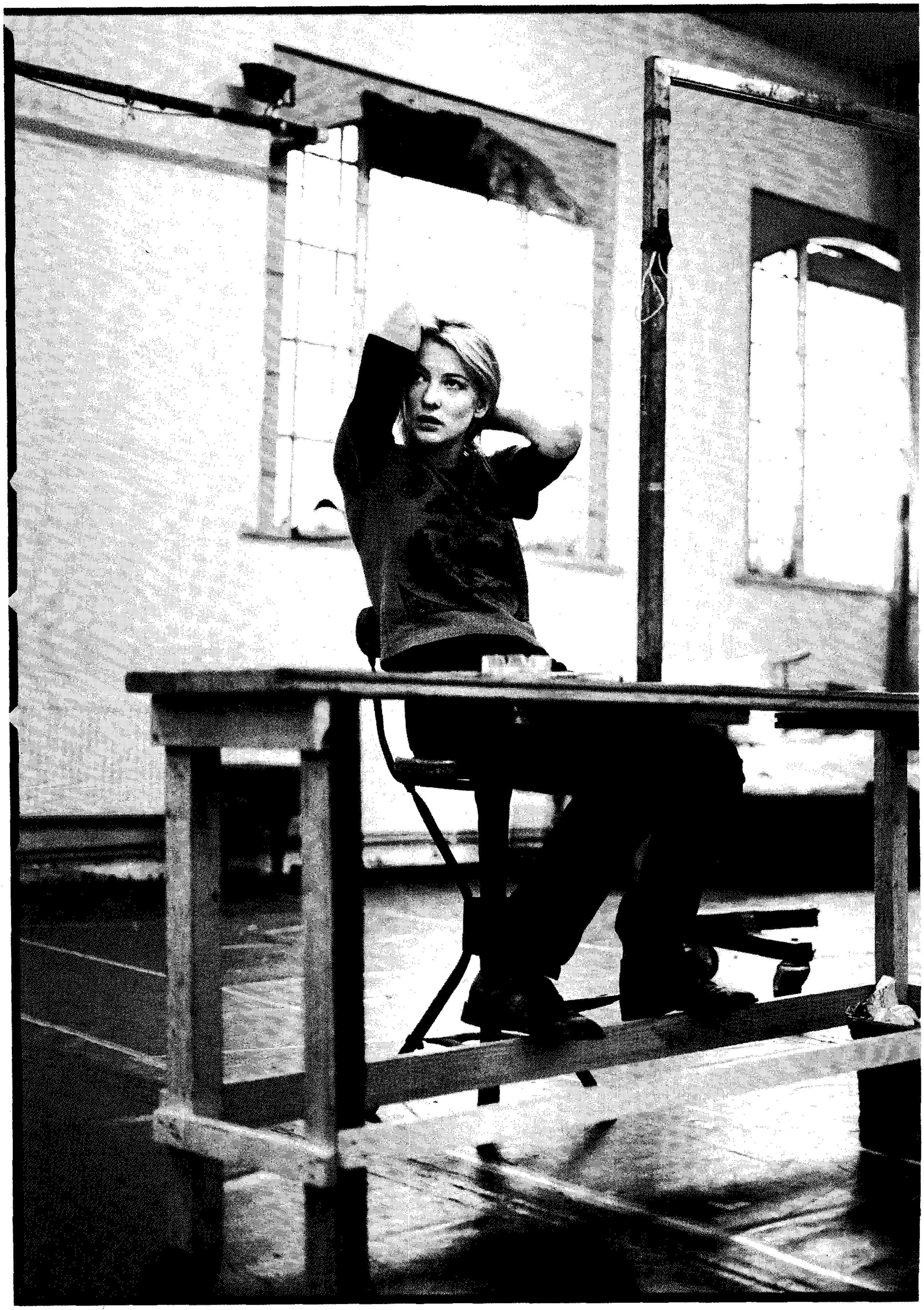
EVERYTHING about Harold Varmus's pre-N.I.H. career supports his conviction that you often end up where you should be by accident. He was born in 1939, in Freeport, Long Island—a descendant of immigrants who had arrived from Poland and Austria at the turn of the century. His father, Frank, was a small-town general practitioner who spent summers as the official doctor for Jones Beach. His mother, Beatrice Barasch, had a master's degree in social work, and was a dominant force in local civic life while she was bringing up her two children—Harold and his younger sister, Ellen.

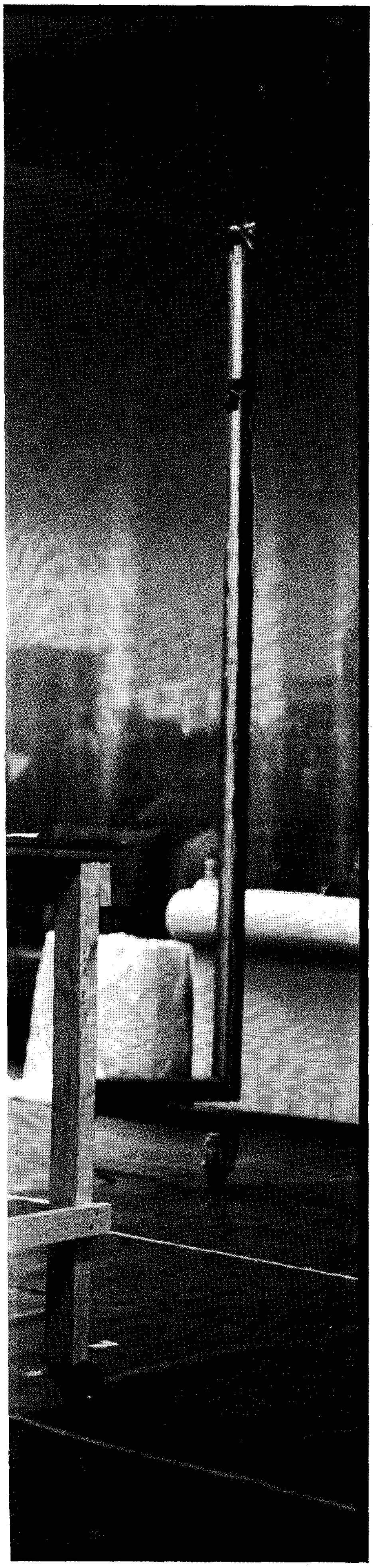
Like many children of doctors, Varmus had long thought that he might go into medicine, and he dutifully took premed courses at Amherst. But he majored in English, wrote his senior thesis on Dickens, and was the editor of the college paper. As he neared graduation, in 1961, he applied for various fellowships and to several graduate schools, hoping to get a Fulbright scholarship to study in Japan. He ended up with a Wilson fellowship for graduate study in English at Harvard. "Halfway through the year, I started going to clinical-pathology rounds at Harvard Medical School, where some of my Amherst classmates were enrolled," he says. "They seemed to be more content with life than I was—and these were first-year medical students! Then, one night, I had a dream that I'd gone on to become an English teacher, that I was ill one day, and that the students were all happy there was no class. And I woke up thinking that if I were a doctor and didn't show up in the office one day patients would be disappointed."

Harvard Medical School rejected Varmus twice, and in 1962 he went to Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons. At first, he planned to go into psychiatry, but he was increasingly drawn toward the study of the scientific basis of disease. He completed his internship and residency at Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital. Then, "at the comparatively advanced age of twenty-eight," as he put it, he had his first serious experience as a scientist, at the N.I.H. In those days, it was a natural stop on an ambitious young scientist's route. Varmus was there in what was in-



"It was right here in this park, Jamie, that I was inspired to become an attorney, when Vinnie Maroney beat me to a pulp."





formally called the Yellow Beret program—a Public Health Service alternative to serving as a military doctor. He had gone to work in the lab of Ira Pastan, a researcher a dozen years his senior, who had also come as a Yellow Beret, in the nineteen-fifties, and had stayed on. Pastan, whose wife is the poet Linda Pastan, noted the English degree in Varmus's background and thereby distinguished him from the hordes of other applicants.

When Varmus interviewed for the position, Pastan was studying hormonal influences on the thyroid gland. By the time Varmus was notified that he had the job, Pastan had switched to researching the genetics of E. coli (a microbe found in the human gut, which has long been a mainstay of lab research). In the short term, the surprise shift in research emphasis was a nuisance for Varmus. "I had a highly memorable moment after Ira told me what I was actually going to be working on," he said. "I went into the interns' reading room late at night and pulled out some of the classic papers on the subject—and, of course, I couldn't even read them. It was terribly embarrassing." But the change symbolized a revolution that was just getting under way in the research field—and which now dominates the agenda of the N.I.H. Essentially, the focus of research shifted, from the operations of organs, or the disorders of whole organisms, like human beings or mice, to the mechanics of cells and, within them, specific genes.

In 1970, Varmus went to the University of California at San Francisco, to work as a postdoctoral research fellow in the laboratory run by Michael Bishop. Over the next decade, their lab made discoveries that changed the subsequent study of cancer. By the early seventies, it had become recognized that damaged or aberrant genes were fundamentally responsible for cancerous growth. The question was where those damaged genes came from. Varmus and Bishop reasoned that cancer-causing oncogenes were, in fact, normal, necessary parts of a cell's genetic structure which had undergone an accumulation of subtle changes, either through random error during cell division or through exposure to mutating agents (radiation, cigarette smoke, and so on). This theory suddenly made sense of a range of previously contradictory-seeming observations about cancer: why there were so many forms of it; why it appeared in both inherited and environmentally induced forms; and why so many of its forms were diseases of old age.

Varmus's research experience taught him the importance of exploring health and sickness at the genetic level—and of letting scientists set the research agenda, rather than marshalling them for "wars" against a particular disease. When Varmus and Bishop made their historic discovery, which won them the Nobel Prize, they first thought they were just adding a refinement to a long-studied form of cancer in chickens; only as they followed the data did they realize that they were learning something about the genetic origin of all cancers.

Varmus remained at U.C.S.F., but, after years of essentially shirking all departmental and bureaucratic obligations at the university in order to concentrate on his research and on his other passions, he began to feel expectations that he ought to shoulder some responsibility for the state of science as a whole. "The Prize does have an effect," he said last fall. "Let's admit it—having this token inspires respect."

Often, it makes other scientists view Nobel laureates as ambassadors of science to the wider world. One of Var-

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KISS ME, CATE

The Australian film star Cate Blanchett, who portrayed the sovereign title character in the 1998 film "Elizabeth," is speaking for England again, in the West End revival of David Hare's "Plenty," an essay in twelve scenes about postwar British political disenchantment. As the unfulfilled and agitated Susan Traherne, a character who has worked for the French Resistance only to see hope turn into hypocrisy, Blanchett doesn't ask to be loved onstage. She gives the fierce, rasping undertones of Hare's mentally deteriorating heroine a fine sense of irony, never making the safe or the vulgar choice, something that can't be said for the play itself. Her stylish presence bestows on Hare's 1978 drama the kiss of commercial life.

Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe

mus's friends and colleagues from U.C.S.F., Bruce Alberts, had been appointed the president of the National Academy of Sciences, and he invited Varmus to become involved in policy discussions. Another former U.C.S.F. colleague, Marc Kirschner, who is now a department chairman at Harvard, recruited Varmus to serve on advisory groups about the future of research funding. In 1992, Varmus joined a group of scientists supporting the Clinton-Gore ticket. The following year, he was confirmed as the new director of the N.I.H.

Despite Varmus's view that the N.I.H.'s funding needed to increase, during his first year in office he had to explain to the world of science that, because of deficits, there was no new money to spread around. He used this period to focus on the culture of the N.I.H.—to reduce politicization and celebrate scientific achievement. He instituted lectures, colloquiums, and other programs to make researchers in one part of the organization feel connected to those in another. He also used his standing to attract other prominent scientists to the N.I.H. His most celebrated coup was retaining Klausner, a forty-seven-year-old N.I.H. researcher who was rumored to be accepting another position when Varmus persuaded him to stay and direct the National Cancer Institute. Last summer, Gerald Fischbach left a department chairmanship at Harvard to direct the National Institute for Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

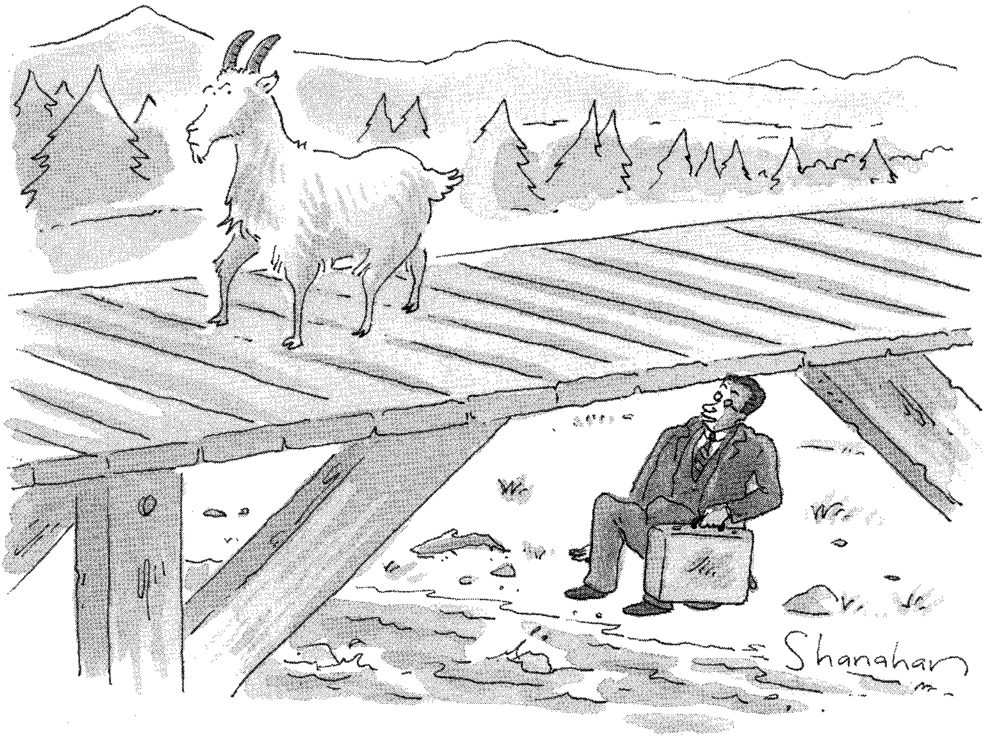
In 1997, Varmus recruited Ellie Ehrenfeld, from the University of California, Irvine, to restructure the peer-review process in order to improve the science that the N.I.H. pays for outside its walls. (Although the N.I.H. conducts a great deal of research on campus, including clinical trials on some ten thousand new patients per year, extramural funding makes up most of what the agency spends—eighty-five per cent annually—and it is paid out to scientists who compete successfully for grant support.) A goal of this reorganization is to include new disciplines and risky, original experiments.

Year after year, in testimony to Congress, Varmus has offered a steadily evolving rationale of the long-term benefits of investing heavily in basic science. He is clearly thrilled by the transformation in medicine being wrought by knowledge of cellular-level functions, and especially genetics. In the popular mind, this may suggest Dolly-type cloning and other potentially sinister prospects. To cell biologists, genes are less dramatic but more pivotal. Every aspect of a cell's behavior involves turning the right genetic switches on and off at the right times. Biology without genetic knowledge is like travelling without a map: possible but imprecise.

Varmus's favorite example of the unexpected importance of genetic knowledge involves AIDS. This is not a "genetic" disease, in the sense of being inherited, but knowledge of gene-level processes is in large part responsible for the dramatic recent increase in AIDS-survival rates. "People don't generally appreciate, as much as those of us in the virology field do, that there was a kind of serendipity in our being ready for AIDS," Varmus says. Being "ready" in this sense means being able to understand very quickly the reproduction pattern of the human immunodeficiency virus, and to begin work on appropriate responses. "We were trying to understand retroviruses"—viruses like H.I.V., which are able to copy their genetic information onto the genes of the cell they are attacking—"because we were trying to understand cancer," Varmus says. Without this earlier genetic work, "we would have been many years slower figuring out what to do about treatment of H.I.V."

For him, the AIDS story demonstrates that research in one area can have surprising benefits in another, and that once the basic science of a disease is known an all-out effort for the cure makes sense. Citing this example, Varmus has stressed the need for a worldwide crusade against malaria, which kills at least a million people a year—mainly children and pregnant women in Africa—and infects as many as five hundred million. "The prospects seem enormous for designing new interventions with modern tools of cell and molecular biology," he said last year. Draining swamps is fine, but as a strategy against malaria it is like trying to prevent polio by keeping children from getting a chill after swimming.

Several of Varmus's colleagues view him as this era's counterpart to Vannevar Bush. During the Second World War, Bush was the director of the Office of Scientific Research



"Who's that trip-tripping, woefully underinsured, over my bridge?"

and Development, which mobilized scientists to work on military projects, including the development of the atomic bomb. In effect, Bush was the father of the military-industrial complex, for he showed what could happen if the nation's scientific, engineering, and industrial powers were to be centrally organized and deployed. Bush's influence derived from the political imperative of winning the war, which made limitless resources available and coincided with a moment of scientific advancement on many fronts: radar, aviation technology, and, of course, knowledge of the atom.

Varmus also commands unusually large resources at an opportune scientific moment. He has stressed the importance of drawing on all the technology currently available, and not merely on the techniques and disciplines usually associated with biological research. He regularly posts his speeches and congressional testimony on his Web site, and, last month, he proposed the creation of an Internet data bank called E-biomed. This would ultimately include the journals that now publish biomedical-research findings, and thereby allow scientists around the world immediate access to the latest information.

Varmus's counterpart to Vannevar Bush's Manhattan Project is the Human Genome Project, which he has strongly supported, and which is currently on schedule to produce a full "map" of the genes in the forty-six human chromosomes by the end of 2003. "There is no other scientific enterprise that humankind has mounted in an organized way that compares to this," Francis Collins, the project's director, says. "I am sure that history will look back on this in a hundred years and say, 'This was the most significant thing humankind has tried to do scientifically.' "

"To hell with you, too."

• •

VARMUS takes pride in his ability to avoid, solve, or blur the edges of controversy. After I'd been meeting with him for several weeks, he pulled out a piece of paper detailing an unusual achievement: fights that might have broken out at the N.I.H. but didn't. These ranged from neighborhood concerns about toxic-waste disposal to the deaths of five hepatitis-B patients who were undergoing treatment with an experimental drug at the N.I.H.'s large research hospital.

Frequently throughout Varmus's tenure, a disease advocacy group or a politician has revved up to criticize him for a misemphasis in research funding: not enough money for diseases that impose high economic burdens on society; not enough to help minority groups; not enough for clinical trials to study which of the radical new therapies will actually work. Almost before his critics can express their full complaint, Varmus has deflated their hostility by heartily agreeing that their concerns should be heard and including them on new advisory boards.

Last year, the most serious of these complaints was made in a report from the Institute of Medicine, a branch of the National Academy of Sciences. It asserted that economic "burden of disease" calculations deserved much higher priority in the N.I.H.'s allocation of research grants, and that the scientists should pay more attention to what diseases the public wanted cured. When it became clear that the agency was seen as unresponsive to outside opinion, Varmus immediately set up a citizen-advisory panel. "Somebody else might have treated this as so much baloney," Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, says of Varmus. "He is extremely shrewd, and he knows where not to go."

Many of Varmus's friends from his research days believed he would lack the patience to sit and listen, smiling, as members of Congress expounded on scientific matters. But he has demonstrated that he can do this very well. His strategy has been to seem so authoritative and judicious that politicians trust him as a kind of expert witness on any matter of medical policy. He also laughs at their jokes, uses their names frequently when he's giving answers, and explains how their support means lives saved and cures produced. His opening remarks last year before an appropriations committee, chaired by Arlen Specter, were typical:

> VARMUS: Mr. Chairman and Senator [Tom] Harkin, thank you very much. First, let me express on behalf of the biomedical research community, and indeed the entire public, your official decision to remain as chairman of this committee—the team you have formed with Senator Harkin here has been truly extraordinary, and the biomedical research community is extremely grateful for your continued support. I'm also very pleased that you're holding this hearing.
>
> SPECTER: Did you like the two-billion-dollar increase last year?
>
> (*Laughter.*)
>
> VARMUS: We, we did, Senator. And we hope that we'll use it well.

At one point, I asked Varmus about the secrets of his political success. "I have the sense that you wish my life had more drama," he replied in an E-mail. "I don't. As I have said before, my strategy has been to try to minimize it."

THE HEDGE

In boyhood's verdure, as if underwater,
my mother and her ancient father struggle
with a rusty brown eel, one on each end—
our iron hedge trimmer, turned by a crank,
its two toothed levels gnashing back and forth
like the contention between parent and child.

How pink my mother's face would get! How grim
the gray of Grandpa's mustache and fedora,
its sweated brim twin to his soaked suspenders.
The hedge enclosed the wide front yard, to corners
like secret caves, where octopi might lurk
in depths of privet only a child would see.

Pride, pride of property, kept us going.
The hedge, like a leafy solid by Magritte,
had round raised intervals to reinforce
an illusion of fortress strength. In fact
we were a feeble crew; the Depression
had left us mere shadows behind our hedge.

Frail Grandma ran up a flag on Memorial Day,
on a thin tin pole. The infrequent guests
and our mailman came up a curved brick walk.
The impregnable hedge, a dry-eyed visit
some decades later told me, has vanished—
the yard, so small, barer than an old rug.

—JOHN UPDIKE

THUS far, this strategy has worked well, but it is difficult to imagine that it will be sufficient when it comes to the growing stem-cell controversy. The scientific implications of stem-cell research are profound, and they engage biologists in some of the most divisive moral questions of our time, just as the implications of atomic energy engaged physicists half a century ago. Stem cells, unlike the cells of a mature organism, have extraordinary generative power. A bone cell, for example, can divide into two bone cells but cannot create a liver cell, and after a number of divisions it will simply die. Stem cells have no such limitations. The ultimate, totipotent stem cell—a fertilized egg—can give rise to all the cell types of a mature organism. Pluripotent stem cells, which develop soon after conception, can produce a wide variety of cell types, and can divide over and over again, thereby raising the miraculous-seeming possibility that one day they could be used to treat disease—to produce new heart tissue for people with heart trouble, say, or new pancreatic cells for those with diabetes—and even to reverse the effects of aging. But the ethical and political problems accompanying stem-cell research are daunting. Stem cells come from discarded embryos and aborted fetuses, and conservative groups have strenuously objected to using public funds to obtain them. In response to pressure from the House of Representatives' Pro-Life Caucus and from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the N.I.H. is prohibited from funding any experiment that deliberately creates or destroys a human embryo.

The prospects for stem-cell research improved dramatically last November, when two researchers announced, more or less simultaneously, that they had succeeded in keeping cultures of stem cells alive in a lab—a necessary step toward the goal of using stem cells for therapy. One of the researchers, John Gearhart, of Johns Hopkins University, obtained stem cells from fetuses that had been legally aborted between five and nine weeks after conception. The other researcher, James Thomson, of the University of Wisconsin, took cells from surplus embryos, released by labs after in-vitro fertilization. Neither had received N.I.H. funds for his work.

These discoveries were an illustration of basic research suddenly offering the promise of dramatic, tangible results. Within days of the first reports of Gearhart's and Thomson's successes, Varmus introduced the scientists at a hastily convened Senate hearing to explain the potential of their work. He also set out the implications of the continued ban on federal funding. He pointed out that as long as embryonic tissue was available from legal sources the research would go forward; the ban would simply insure that this ethically complicated research took place with no public scrutiny, no public discussion of the rules of conduct, and no public voice in the uses that the private sponsors might make of it. But, as usual, Varmus made it equally clear that the N.I.H. intended to abide by the letter of the law.

As the senators were trying to figure out how to respond to the stem-cell news, so were members of the medical establishment within the executive branch. In January, the legal office of the Department of Health and Human Services issued an opinion that the N.I.H. could fund stem-cell research as long as its scientists did not destroy the embryo themselves. Even then, Varmus proposed to begin such funding only after an internal advisory panel had worked out guidelines for supervising stem-cell research.

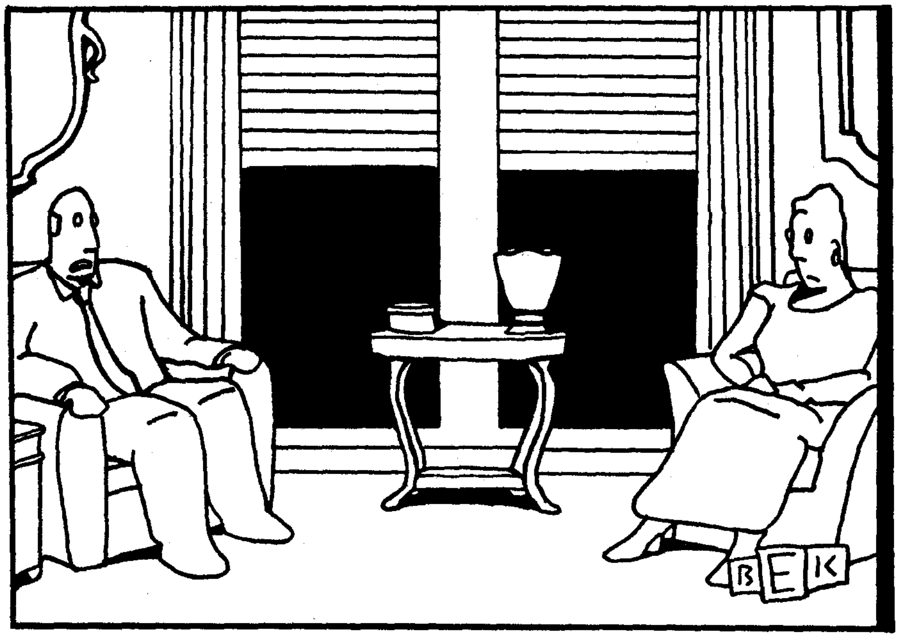
Nevertheless, this issue is likely to prove more incendiary than any other that Varmus has addressed. In response to the Health and Human Services legal opinion, seventy members of the House promptly signed a letter of protest, and seven senators followed with a joint letter of their own. Even Specter, who agreed with the opinion, was concerned about its political reception. "I think Dr. Varmus is cutting it very fine," he said a few weeks ago. "If that will get the job done, O.K. But I have questions about whether that will get the job done." Specter says that he is willing to propose legislation to overturn the ban, if that is necessary; meanwhile, representatives of the Pro-Life Caucus in the House say they might attach explicit prohibitions on stem-cell projects to the N.I.H.'s appropriations bill this fall.

The likelihood of an all-out battle increased sharply last month, when the National Bioethics Advisory Commission, which was appointed by Clinton in 1995, indicated that it would recommend rescinding the ban on federal funding for most research involving pluripotent stem cells. The working papers of the commission's report, which have just been posted on the Internet, propose that the N.I.H. abandon the legalistic reasoning that Varmus recently adopted and instead underwrite the entire process. They argue that the moral claims of suffering patients outweigh the moral claims of potential life, and that public supervision would reduce the risk of abuse.

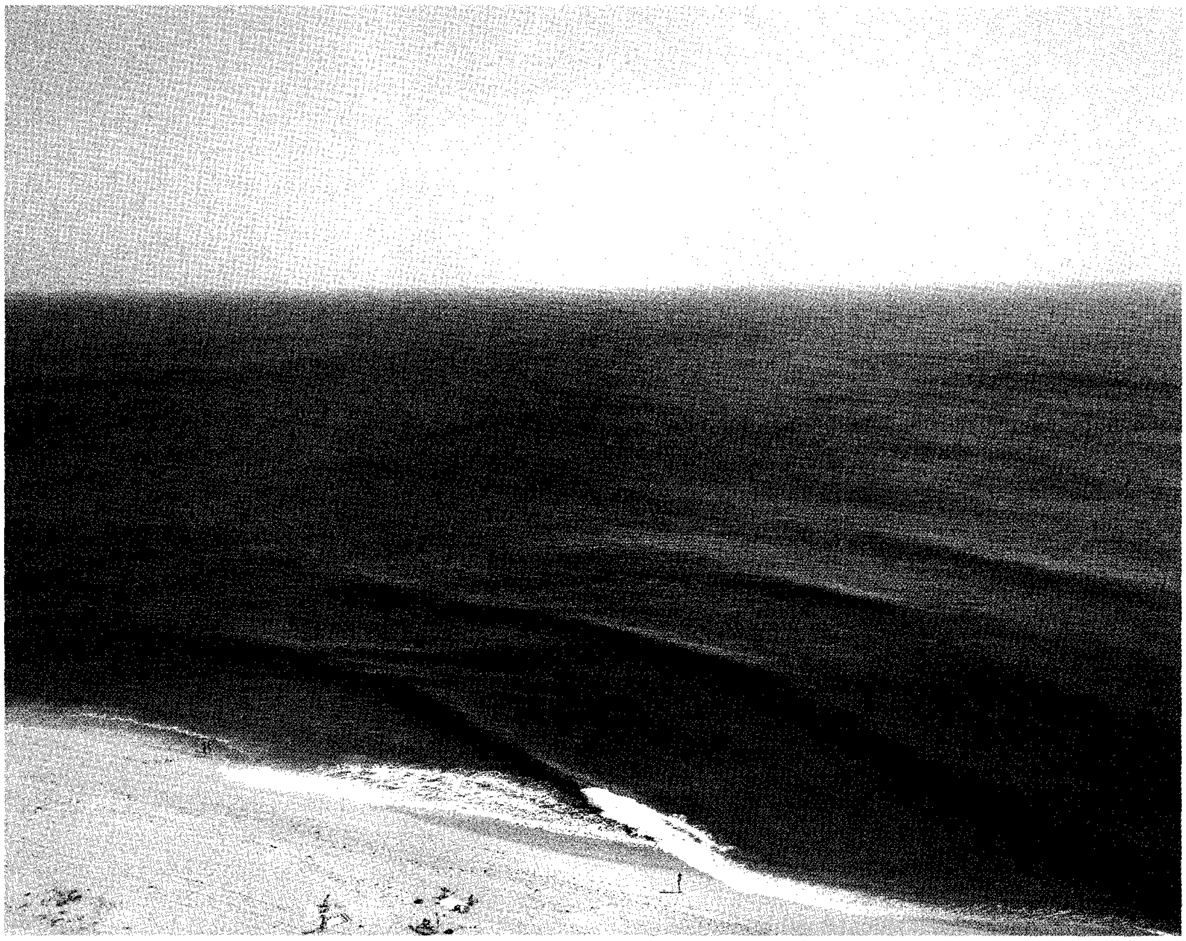
By recommending that the government finance experiments that some citizens find unacceptable, the commission virtually guaranteed that the next round of the abortion wars will involve the N.I.H. budget. The debates, which will take place this summer, will have less to do with new efforts against malaria and Alzheimer's and more to do with the symbolic rights of the embryo. The opponents of stem-cell research are a distinct minority in the Congress, but the intensity of their commitment magnifies their power and makes the outcome of a vote on stem-cell research impossible to predict.

The only time I heard Harold Varmus sound tired was when we discussed this impending threat. I asked him if he thought that his budget, after so many years of uninterrupted increase, would precipitate a congressional melee, and he just said wearily, "I don't know." But, oddly, this same shift has returned him to his accustomed role as the man in the reasonable middle. Before news of the commission's recommendations leaked out, the Pro-Life Caucus and the Catholic bishops viewed Varmus as their adversary. Now his opinion has become the "moderate" alternative, since he has been careful not to advocate federal support for creating or destroying embryos that—in theory—could live. Instead, he has taken pains to state the scientific issues clearly and to avoid giving needless offense.

Varmus's present restrained view is not a reflection of indifference to stem-cell research; instead, it demonstrates his investment in the political process. Ordinary people, Varmus once told me, care about the destinations of science—the answers, the miracles, the cures. But a scientist cares most deeply about the journey itself. He was describing his experiences in the lab, but his words could have applied equally well to his tenure at the N.I.H.: "You start with some subjective ideas of what the answers might be. You try to test them with measurement. There are a lot of juices flowing as you work in the lab. So many things are at stake! Careers, competition, people's ideas of how the world works. And then succeeding at the bench gives you this incredible rush that is high up there on the scale of human pleasures." ♦



"In the old days, we weren't old."



JOEL MEYEROWITZ "LONGNOOK BEACH" / JAMES DANZIGER GALLERY

FICTION

GRAPE BAY (1941)

A solitary holiday remembered.

BY WILLIAM MAXWELL

At low tide in Grape Bay, islands with sea grass on them appear and small striped fish are left stranded in the rocks. It is possible to walk quite far out before you are in water up to your knees. For hours it is that way. At high tide the islands go down again and you can swim within six feet of the shore. There are always a few people on the beach and those few—Americans, for the most part—know each other intimately. They sit in a tight circle and make jokes about Bermudians and rub suntan oil on one another's backs and then stretch out passively in the sun. Their children in tiny sunsuits go back and forth with shovels and sand buckets, pouring water into the sand and sand into the water. Occasionally their dogs go wild and chase each other through the circle. Everybody sits up then and complains mildly and brushes the sand off. But after cigarettes have gone round they relax into positions that are practically the same as before, except that different people have assumed them.

A stranger coming to Grape Bay for the first time can open the circle with a single friendly remark. Sweaters and beach towels are moved and there is a place for him from then on. There would have been a place for Hunt if he had spoken to anybody, but he could never make the first move. It was not merely shyness. When he was six years old his parents died, one immediately after the other, and he went to live with his paternal grandfather, who did not like children. It did not take him long to learn what it means not to be wanted. Now that he was grown, his first impulse was always to withdraw before it became necessary, before someone asked him to.

The first time he appeared at Grape Bay he was ready any moment to pick up his book and his beach towel and go away. No one snubbed him or questioned in any way his right to be on the beach, but no one spoke to him either. It was the same the next time he came and each time after that. Apparently so far as the other people on the beach were concerned, he didn't exist. He could be in the water ten feet from three or four or five of them and he could duck into wave after wave with them and come up laughing and they would never know he was there.

When the children tripped and fell crying in front of him he stood them on their feet and told them there, there, they were all right, and they seemed to be grateful. The fact that they did not remember him afterward he attributed to some influence of the place, an influence to be found perhaps on any semitropical island. But it troubled him. He swam or dived into the waves until he was tired and then he went back to that part of the beach he had staked out for himself with his blue bath towel.

If he grew restless from lying too long in the sand he wandered up or down the beach with his shoes under his arm. Up the beach there were arches and caves that at high tide were accessible only from the water. Sand had accumulated inside them and enough light came in for Hunt to be able to read names and dates cut in the damp rock. Down the beach was a limestone cliff with cypress trees growing along the edge. When he had climbed to the top he was hidden from the beach by the trees. He took off his swimming trunks and sunned himself on a big rock, lying now on his back with his eyes closed, now on his stomach with his face resting on his hands. After a while he would crawl to the edge of the cliff and look down. In the clear water directly below he could nearly always find angelfish, poised or darting fiercely at each other. A wave would come in at regular intervals and erase them but when the sea stopped churning they were there again, vermillion and bright blue and sometimes ultramarine.

Hunt was staying at a guesthouse in Paget a mile or two from the shore. As a rule he came down to the beach after breakfast, left his bicycle in the trees, and stayed until lunchtime. In the afternoon he came again. One night after dinner he went outside and got his towel from the line. Nothing extraordinary had prompted him. He hadn't had enough, that was all.

At night everything along the road was unfamiliar. What surprised him most was the bay, which was not luminous as he had imagined but dark all the way out. He got off his bicycle at the top of Strawberry Hill and looked down, as though at a known face that had suddenly become unfriendly. Halfway down the hill was a house with its white roof bare to the sky. Then the road curved slightly and the grape trees rose up, a region of dense formless shadow. Anything could be down there, he said to himself; and it was that which finally decided him.

At the bottom of the hill it was not so dark but that he found the path and managed to stay on it. When he had made his way through the trees to the beach he saw a light far down, almost at the foot of the cliff. Someone was moving about there with a flashlight. It would stay steady for a moment and then it would dance over the rocks and out toward the water. Hunt spread his towel and sat down.

The fact that he might not have the beach to himself hadn't occurred to him. He waited with a quickening of his heartbeat while the circle of light drew nearer and nearer until there was no question, finally, that the person with the flashlight, whoever it was, had seen him and was coming toward him across the sand. The circle reached Hunt and swung upward past his face. A voice behind the light, a young man's voice, said, "Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were somebody else."

"That's all right," Hunt said quietly. No one could have told in the dark how disappointed he was. What he had expected was somebody who was looking for him. It had seemed quite possible for a moment. The flashlight turned toward the water. A wave broke across its path and then foam washed in.

"I thought you were Jerry Longtemple," the voice said. "He comes down here sometimes at night. I've seen you on the beach, though. My name is Dick Compton." The flashlight went off.

Hunt stood up and put out his hand in the darkness. "Mine's Hunt," he said.

He could see better without the light. The moment he shook hands with Compton he recognized him. He was younger than Hunt, about twenty-three or four, and he was staying somewhere down the beach. At least he always came from that way. Every day along about noon he would appear in a long white beach robe and make his way down the limestone cliff. It was worth watching. The robe blew out around him like a sail, and he came up the beach without hurrying and took his place in the circle.

"Cigarette?" Compton asked.

"Thanks," Hunt said.

The first two matches went out in the wind but they put their heads and their hands together over the third and it did the trick. The business of lighting cigarettes also formed a bridge that made it possible for them to go on talking. They both sat down on the towel.

"Nice night," Compton said.

"Beautiful!"

"Two or three times when you were down here on the beach I started to come over and talk to you," Compton said. "I like talking to people, but you looked as if you wanted to be by yourself and so I didn't."

Hunt leaned forward until his face was on his knees. "As a matter of fact," he said, "I've had enough of being by myself. If somebody doesn't talk to me pretty soon I'm going to swim out three or four miles and stay."

Compton laughed. "Nobody would talk to you out there," he said.

"How do you know?" Hunt asked, straightening up. "The bottom of the ocean may be a place where people talk and talk, to their heart's content."

"You can do that without drowning," Compton said.

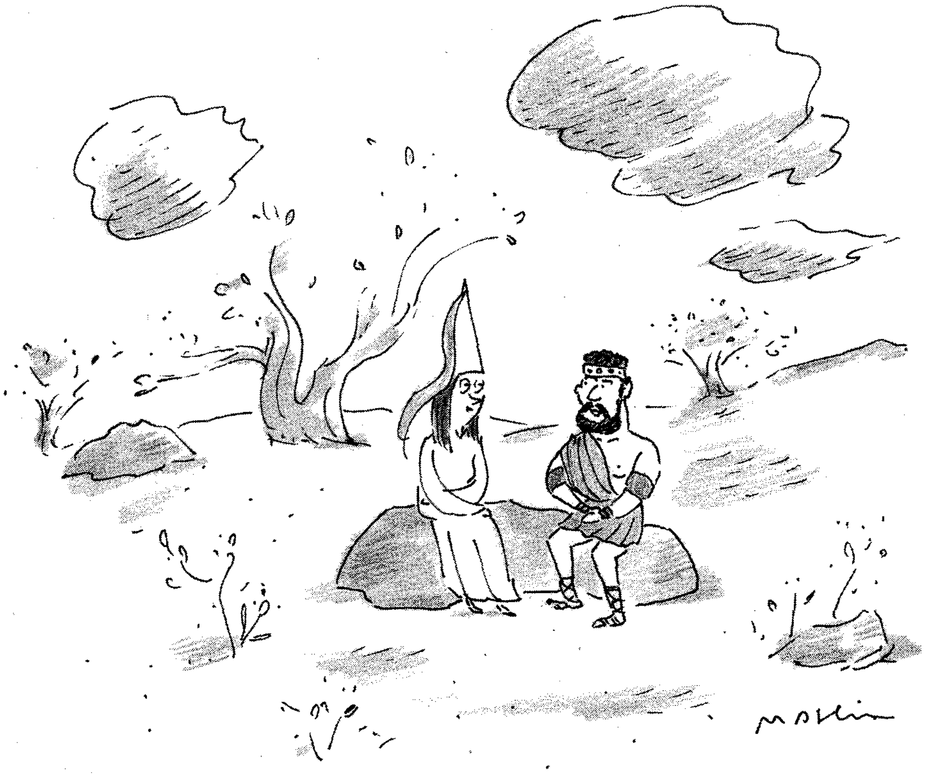
"On dry land," Hunt said, "there's never anybody to talk to. Or if there is, they don't listen, they don't hear half of what you say."

Compton's cigarette flew into the darkness in a wide arc and disappeared twenty feet away.

"I'm listening," he said.

WHEN Hunt came down to the beach next day the wind was blowing off the ocean. He left his bicycle leaning against the same tree and spread his beach towel on the same place in the sand. Anyone watching him would not have noticed the slightest change. Yet the day before was so different to him, so far away that he could hardly remember it.

There were low, swift-moving clouds, and from as far out as he could see, green waves were rolling in and spilling on top of each other. The children had withdrawn to the safety of the beach and were building a sand fortress there. Ordinarily they were scattered up and down the length of Grape Bay, and though two or three would sometimes settle in one spot it was never for long. Something always compelled them to drop what they were doing and go



"I'm a gladiator, but that's just to put food on the table. What I really want to do is teach."

somewhere else. But this morning they were working together with concentration and a single purpose, as if they had decided to anticipate some future development in the race.

By comparison the grownups seemed to have retrogressed. They rode in on waves face down, like drowned people, and the moment they found themselves in shallow water jumped up and ran back for more. Hunt watched them for a while without any desire to become a part of their excitement. Then he made a hollow place for himself in the sand and closed his eyes. An hour passed and he got up suddenly and started running along the strip of hard wet sand. Occasionally he turned and trotted backward with his eyes on the limestone cliff.

The night before, he and Compton had sat side by side for over an hour, talking quietly and steadily, their faces turned toward each other or raised now and then to the sky. They talked about seasons and places, about books, about the war and the draft, about money, about sex, about love. Eventually they talked about death and what chances there were of something coming afterward. Now in broad light, with clouds travelling overhead where the stars had stood in their places, Hunt tried to remember each thing as it had been said, the whole conversation intact. Nothing like it had ever happened to him before. The astonishment of saying what you deeply believe and finding that everybody, or at least one other person, has gone down the same road; that nothing you think or feel is an isolated experience but always belongs to many people at the same time. Even his not knowing that, Hunt decided, was probably as much a part of the pattern as all the rest.

He felt drawn to Compton and curious about him—about where he lived, whether he was married or single, what he did for a living. At the time, their conversation had seemed intimate, but he realized now that it had been limited entirely to generalities, and that the first interruption had been sufficient to bring it to an end. While he was explaining why there could be no such thing as the immortality of the soul, Compton's flashlight went on with no warning and he rolled over on his side to look at a sand crab. It waved its claws at them irritably and, with both Compton and Hunt following, retreated across the sand. When it couldn't get away from the flashlight it suddenly dug down out of sight and left the two of them standing there.

THERE were so many arches and caves to explore that Hunt had never gone beyond the point where they ended. This morning he kept on until he came to sheer rock, which drove him back from the water and onto higher ground. There the trees closed in around him. When they opened again he found himself looking down on a huge pink hotel with acres of windows all shuttered tight, a casualty of the war. In Hamilton and on St. David's, where the American bases were being constructed, there were constant reminders of what was going on in Europe. But only when planes flew low over the beach or when the wind carried the sound of remote rifle practice did the war's shadow fall on this side of the island.

At this season of the year the windows of the hotel should have been wide open and looking out to sea. The grass should have been cut, the hibiscus hedges neatly trimmed. There ought to have been flowers. Shouts ought to have been coming from the tennis courts—"Deuce"... "Yours, partner"... "Deuce again." People ought to have been sitting around on deck chairs or at little tables under striped umbrellas. They ought to have been drinking long summer drinks and enjoying the fact that it was winter. Actually, though, there wasn't a living person in sight. Around the walks the grass was nearly knee high. Wild morning glories had taken possession of the tennis courts. The outdoor swimming pool was beginning to fill up with leaves.

The strange thing was that Hunt was not surprised by any of it. He had a curious feeling, as he turned and made his way back into the trees, that he had known about this place all along; that he had known exactly how it would be.

It was late in the morning when he got back to Grape Bay. He stumbled over the ruins of the sand fortress. The grown people, with the exception of a colored nurse, were huddled in their usual group. Compton was with them and sat with his back to the direction from which Hunt had come. His white beach robe was wrapped around his shoulders as a protection against the wind.

Hunt settled down in his own place and put half his mind on a week-old copy of *Time* magazine, which he had found lying on the beach. National and foreign affairs were damp and stuck together. He was experimenting with various ways of pulling pages apart when there was a violent upheaval nearby. People rose to their knees, shouted, threw sand and shells at one of the dogs, and finally drove him away. In that interval Compton saw Hunt and came over.

"Hello," he said. "I looked for you when I first came down."

"I've been up the beach," Hunt said. He kept out of his voice his pleasure in the fact that someone had at last been looking for him, but when he smiled it broke out all over his face. "What's the matter over there?" he asked. The circle was quieter, though murmurs and exclamations of annoyance continued to go around.

"Oh, it's just Bert," Compton said.

"That woolly black-and-white dog?"

"Yes," Compton said. "He lifts his leg on people's clothes wherever he finds them, and then five minutes later he comes back expecting to be loved."

They both laughed, and Compton sat down tailor fashion and began sifting handfuls of sand. He seemed to have little to say this morning.

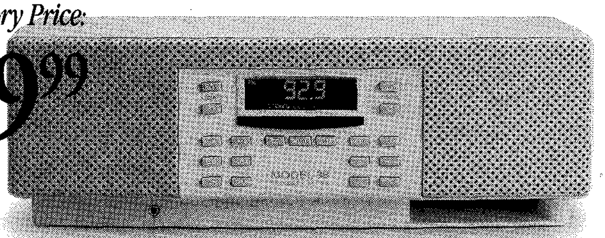
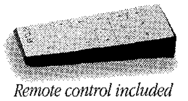
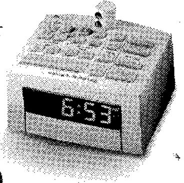
One topic of conversation after another died of its own weight until he suggested that they go join the circle. Hunt found himself then, as he had so often imagined, being introduced to Mrs. Rawson, to Mr. Hardy, to Jerry Longtemple, Miss Clark, Mr. Draper, Mrs. Longtemple, Mrs. Clark, Mr. Fearing, Madame Miramova, Mr. Hall. Seen from close up, however, they were neither so charming nor so young as Hunt had thought they were. It was like sitting in the front row at the theatre and being conscious of greasepaint.

From the other side of the circle Mrs. Longtemple smiled at Hunt and said, "Do you mind telling me how old you are?"

"He's twenty-eight," Jerry Longtemple said.

Hunt nodded.

"My son has no manners," Mrs. Longtemple said. "You mustn't pay any attention to him. I have an older son who is in the Navy. He looks quite like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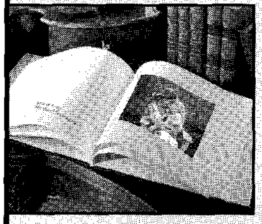
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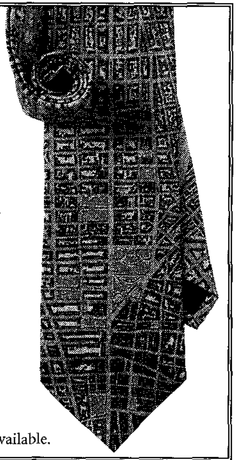
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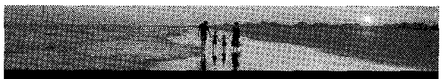
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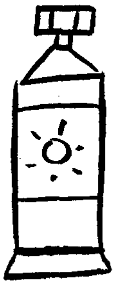
you. I think that must be the reason why I hanker for you."

"My mother also has a niece who is about your age," Jerry Longtemple said. "Lovely girl. Wears her hair parted in the middle, with little ribbons, and she's very anxious to marry again."

For a moment Hunt was embarrassed and colored deeply, but no one seemed to be paying any attention. The others were all talking about an American millionaire who owned most of Grape Bay and had built a large house overlooking it, on the top of the hill. Mrs. Clark had been there for tea, four years ago.

"He told me he bought it—all of it—in 1931 for fifty thousand dollars, his idea being that if worst came to worst he could always retire to this place and keep a cow and raise potatoes." Mrs. Clark looked around to see if her audience was amused. "Then he spent another hundred thousand dollars on the house," she continued, "and lived in it one winter from December to the middle of February." A small boy in a red sunsuit, with yellow curls under his straw hat, came and stood beside her, waiting for her to finish her story. "That was the winter it rained all the time," she said, "and so he hasn't been back since.... What is it, darling?"

What Mrs. Clark's little boy wanted was to be allowed to eat lunch with her, and after some discussion it was arranged. She took his hat off and brushed the hair out of his eyes, and he wandered off, stubbing his toe and getting up again.



The woman next to Hunt, Mrs. Rawson, asked him where he was staying. He started to describe the guesthouse and her attention wandered. He kept on doggedly, and when he had finished she said she thought she knew where it was. Then she leaned over his knees and spoke to Compton. "When's your sister coming, Dick?"

"Saturday morning," Compton said. He was stretched out flat, his face shielded by one arm.

"I must give a cocktail party for her," Mrs. Rawson said.

"I doubt if she'll let you," Compton said. He took his arm away and smiled at her, a smile that was disarming and satisfied Mrs. Rawson but not Hunt, who excused himself politely and went toward the water. He understood now why Compton had seemed so restless and uncommunicative, and he told himself, as the first wave broke over him, that there was no reason why Compton should have mentioned his sister or the fact that she was coming. The second wave caught him off balance, rolled him over and over along the bottom, and flung him gasping on the wet sand.

AT quarter to seven on boat days a line of carriages formed in front of the customs house. The sound they made going through the streets, the trotting sound, sank in upon Hunt's half-awakened mind. Two separate stages of his life stirred in him. He was in the uncertain present and also in that far-off beginning when people were just changing over from horses to automobiles and his childhood existence was still ringed round with security and love. It took him a moment after he had opened his eyes to adjust himself to his loss.

An hour later during breakfast two deep blasts announced the anchoring of the boat. The quiet was so full of anticipation that Hunt took his coffee outside on the upper veranda and waited for the carriages. At first the traffic was all toward Hamilton, toward the waterfront; but suddenly there was a turning and everything seemed to come from the opposite direction, all the carriages returning now with tourists in them, with the fringed carriage tops bobbing and the drivers talking loudly and pointing with their whips. Though Hunt watched each one, peering at the people in it until the carriage had gone by, there was no face he recognized. Finally the traffic subsided to its ordinary level: a Negro on his way to work, a man driving a team of mules.

Hunt continued to sit there, watching the Portuguese gardener work his way along the flower beds and keeping track of two small lizards who were sunning themselves in a nearby flowering tree. When he could not sit still any longer he walked back and forth on the veranda, talking to himself, disposing of something now which would never have to be disposed of again. He had always gone everywhere and done everything by himself. He always would. The conversation on the beach that night had been an accident and hadn't changed anything, but only made it necessary for him to understand once and for all what kind of person he was. No matter where he was he would never belong, he would always stay on the sidelines, hungry-eyed. That was his nature. There were people of another kind, who never actually saw anything but whose very existence was wonderful because without any effort on their part you were continually aware of them. Such an attraction was not human necessarily. It belonged as much to the order of animals and things. And since it was everywhere there was no point in trying to possess it. That was what it meant to be grown up, to be mature. You could look at a bronze tiger in a hotel lobby and instantly it was yours. Having had it for that length of time (which would be plenty long enough) you could go on about your business. You did not have to find the hotel manager and make him an offer. Even if you wanted to, you could not carry around with you the intolerable burden of all the things and all the people in the world. It was enough that you yourself were alive and perceptive to their quality, whatever it was.

BEFORE the boat sailed that afternoon Hunt rode into Hamilton to cash a check. When he came out of Trimingham's he had to wait, the street being full of carriages and bicycles, and he saw Compton with a girl who looked exactly like him, even to the excitement and the color of her eyes. The girl was having a terrible time to keep from falling off her bicycle, and Compton was laughing at her. Hunt swallowed hard. The old unvarying negative impulse rose to take possession of him, but he continued to stand there looking at Compton and that girl, who were somehow in themselves everything he had ever wanted to be or have. They were so close he could have stepped in front of them. He didn't move, though, or make a sound until they had passed. Then he turned suddenly and ran after them with his heart beating wildly and a feeling inside him like hundreds of windows being opened, like sunlight shining on the sea. ♦

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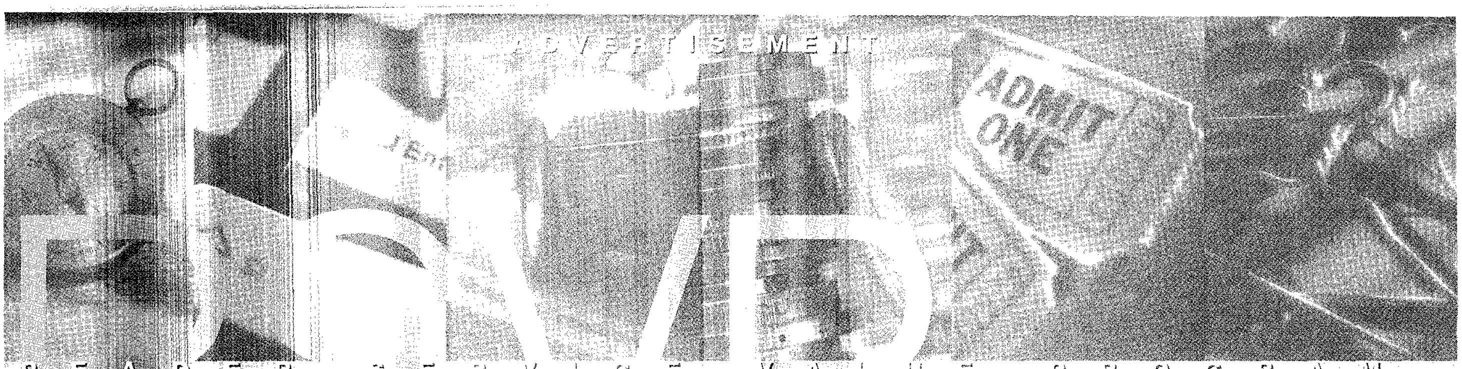

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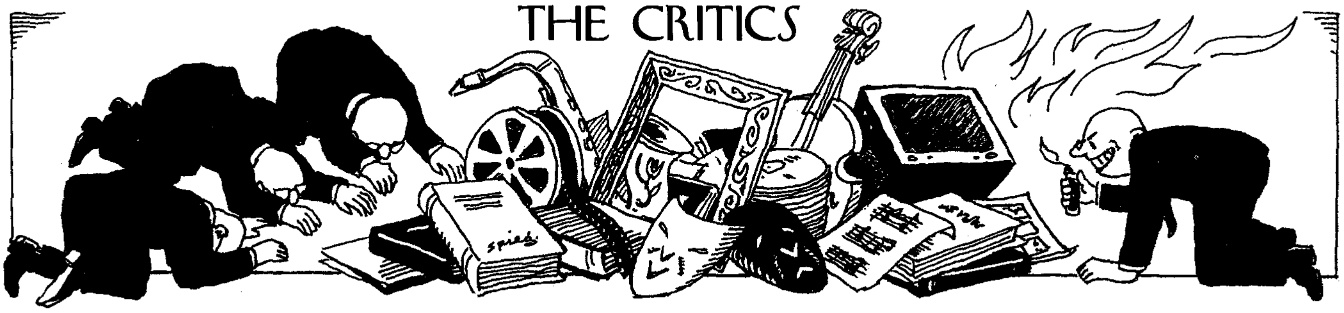


A CRITIC AT LARGE

JOYCE'S ODYSSEY

The labors of "Ulysses."

BY EDNA O'BRIEN

AT the age of twenty, as the impecunious James Joyce prepared to leave Dublin in order "to forge the conscience of his race," he wrote blisteringly to Lady Gregory, the doyenne of Irish literary society, "I have found no man yet with a faith like mine." That faith has since been vindicated, but his insistence that he did not want to be a "literary Jesus Christ" was sorely tried. Joyce's journey as a writer was one of martyrdom: the odium meted out to each of his works was strenuous, but it was "Ulysses" that met with the most vituperative attacks. It was seen as technically monstrous, antihumanist, unclean, and excrementous. The doings, the sayings, the veniality, the music, the cadences of his Dubliners are all there, as is the city itself, but his real crime in that strife of tongues was to break the sexual taboos of holy Ireland, Victorian England, and puritanical America.

What would Joyce, the prevaricator, make of the revels that are held each year on June 16th, in commemoration of his miscreant hero Leopold Bloom? On Bloomsday in Dublin, men and women in Edwardian dress recite snatches of "Ulysses." Bloom's favorite foods—kidneys and other innards of beasts—are served at several rival breakfasts with, of course, Guinness, the national drink. More than other Irish literary icons, Joyce continues to command such revels because his work—particularly "Ulysses"—is a minefield of new riches, new explosives, each time we return to it. The Joyce I loved and learned from formerly has metamorphosed into an even more radical, more elusive, more labyrinthine writer than when I first read him or later read Richard Ellmann's great biography of him. If the seven stages of man, as defined by Shakespeare's melancholy Jaques, pertain, then Joyce is the author to conduct each one of us through our successive reading lives.

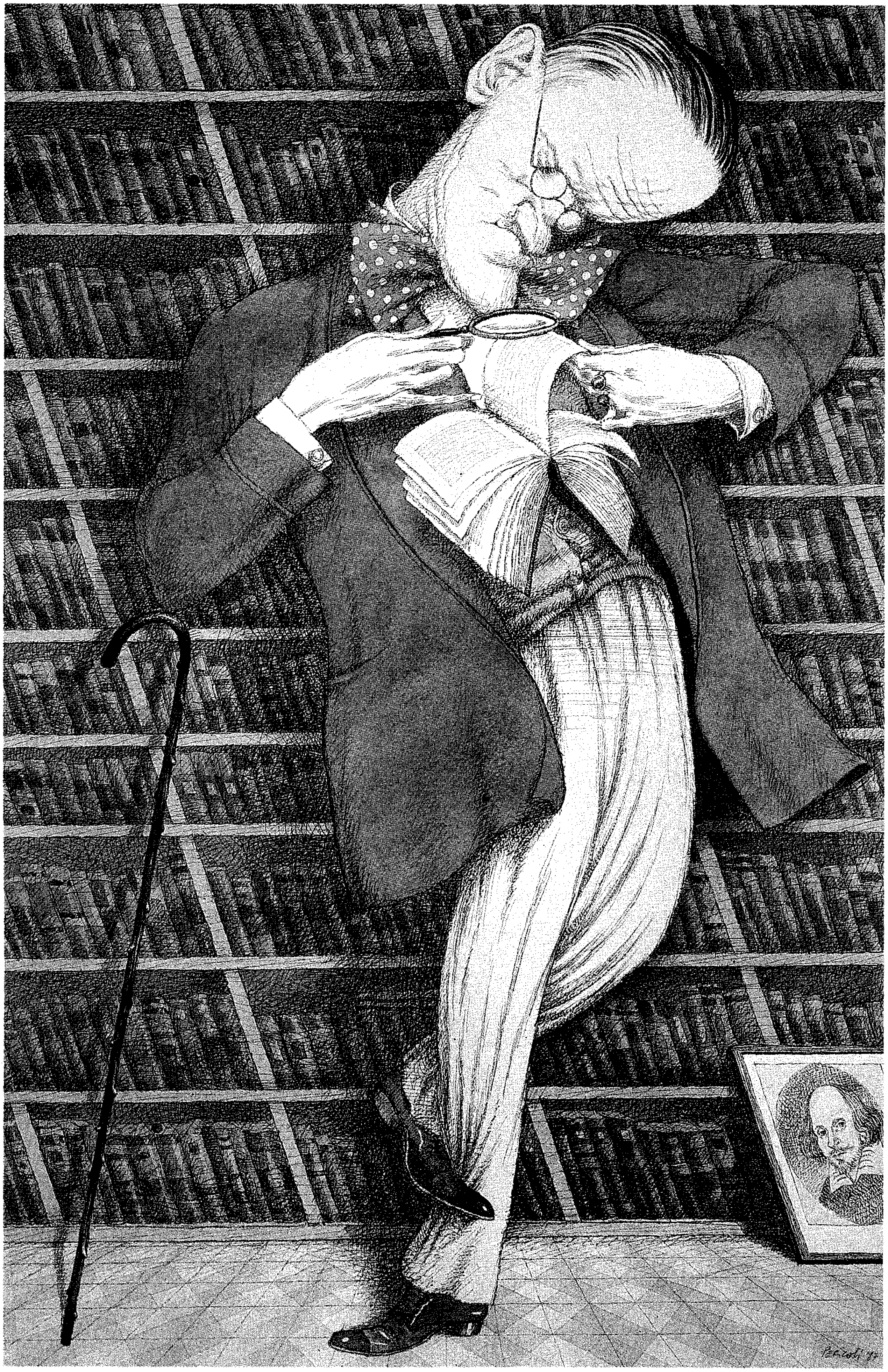
JOYCE left Ireland—that "scullery maid of Christendom"—in 1904, to escape its confiningness, and went with his sweetheart, Nora Barnacle, to teach in a Berlitz school on the Adriatic coast, first in Pola, and then in Trieste. Being of a restless disposition, he soon tired of Trieste, with its drab provincials and a bora wind that turned men with ruddy complexions, like his, into butter. Rome, the Eternal City, suited his destiny, and, moreover, his hero Ibsen had wintered there. He found a job in a bank writing letters to foreign customers for nine hours a day.

In truth, anger over his financial straits and frustration at not having his short stories published was hotting up in him as he searched for that "fermented ink" to stir his bile, the way shots of absinthe sizzled his brain. It was in Rome, in 1906, that he first conceived of "Ulysses"—"that little epic of the Irish and Hebrew races." From there, he voiced his literary manifesto in a postcard to his brother, Stanislaus. He wrote that if he were to put a bucket down into his own soul's sexual department he would haul up the muddied waters of Arthur Griffith, the leader of Sinn Féin; Shelley; Ibsen; St. Aloysius; and Renan, the biographer of Christ. In short, cerebral sexuality and bodily fervor were universal: there was no such thing as a pure man or a pure woman. Joyce was about to do through words what Freud, whom he reviled, was attempting to do with highly strung patients in a cultivated but stifling Vienna.

He did not actually start writing "Ulysses" for eight more years, and by then he was living in Zurich, to which he and Nora had moved to escape the war. True to his talismanic inclinations, he liked to remind himself that, at the age of thirty-six, he was roughly as old as Dante had been when he began his "Divine Comedy," and the age Shakespeare had been when he was struck by the Dark Lady of the sonnets. But his principal model would be Homer—blind Homer, precursor to blind Joyce, who, after laboring the seven years it took to complete "Ulysses," was to suffer from glaucoma, cataracts, and dissolution of the retina. Nothing foreshadowed the transformation that was taking place within him. "Dubliners" had had a rending tenderness, and "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" was full of aesthetic self-questioning, but "Ulysses" would be seismic.

To make the book accurate to Dublin life required help from friends and relatives. It did not occur to Joyce that the pious ones, including members of his family, would recoil from his obscenities or that the literati who had been his drinking friends in his medical-

The Dublin poet Austin Clarke said that Joyce was afflicted "with a particular kind of Irish pornography."



school days would envy him the altitude to which his genius would go. One such friend was Oliver Gogarty, who, in an article published in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, in 1941, reminisced about Joyce with a sickening sanctimoniousness that did little to conceal his envy, and rued the fact that, in writing "Ulysses," Joyce had lost the keys to his inferno. Joyce hadn't lost anything: he merely wanted to insure that every detail, every feature of the Dublin he had left and would never live in again, was flawlessly and matchlessly rendered.

He would need to know the kind of pianola in Bella Cohen's brothel, the kind of lamp that Stephen Dedalus would smash with his ashplant when the ghost of his dead mother appeared, and the pretty music-hall airs that might be played. ("My Girl's a Yorkshire Lass" was what he decided on.) And Homer: he was always returning to Homer. He was intrigued by Hermes' gift of a moly flower to Ulysses, to protect the traveller from Circe's wiles. This moly flower—a white flower with a black root which was said to have magic propensities—was "a hard nut to crack," he wrote to his friend Frank Budgen. It led to a train of questions. Would it be an invisible influence against accident? If so, what accident might that be? Syphilis, he thought, but then he wondered if the etymology of syphilis was "swine love" or "synphileis"—the conjoining of humans. And could the moly also be absinthe, which made men impotent—the juice of chastity, the blessed potion against contracting syphilis? He corresponded with the Baroness St. Leger, "a siren of the Lago Maggiore," and she assured him that the moly was the garlic flower. He chose Hermes, the god of signposts, to shepherd Leopold Bloom in his traversal of the city in the course of a single day, before he returned home late at night to his sexually robust wife, Molly. Greece and Dublin, the ancient and the modern, coalesced into one.

Joyce was equipped with rhyming dictionaries, maps, street directories, Gilbert's "Historic and Municipal Documents of Ireland." He badgered his friends for precise information on this or that—a list of shops, awnings, the steps leading down to 7 Eccles Street. He asked his faithful Aunt Josephine to get a page of foolscap and scribble down any "Goddamn drivel" that came into her head, and to find out whether, during the winter of 1893, the canals had been frozen hard enough for people to skate on. To Frank Budgen, he wrote, "Approach an ink bottle." Budgen had been a sailor, and for Joyce, his experiences at sea—sea stories, sea slang, the sexual pangs of the sailors—had to be transferred into the mouths of aroused Dublin wanderers. After each exertion, he would collapse and repair to a bedroom—his eyesight worse than ever, Nora having to nurse him.

But Joyce's powers of recuperation were great, and soon he would be up again, teaching, writing, visiting the taverns and the brothels—"the most interesting places in any city"—and, on occasion, bamboozling the landlord for a week's or a month's extension on the rent by playing a tune on his hire-purchase piano. Zurich was full of stimulation. Greeks, Poles, Germans, conscientious objectors, artists, chancers, and spies had all convened in the same city, and many of them frequented the Pfauen Café, where Joyce himself drank and overheard their crackpot theories of Futurism, Cubism, and Dadaism.

His listeners must have been enthralled by this lank, sandy-haired Irishman, with the near boneless handshake and the supple wit, who questioned each about what he knew best. He copied their slang and their anecdotes onto slips of paper, which he consigned to his pockets. He spoke five languages and had as well a smattering of Greek, though not the classical language. Greeks were good luck, nuns ill luck. He would have to know if the pigeons that flew between Scylla and Charybdis bore a resemblance to the Dublin ones, and he welcomed, even from strangers, anatomical descriptions of the Sirens in their coral caves, poised to ravish the sailors. He carried a pair of miniature drawers that he would put two fingers into and dangle puppetlike on the counter table, to the amusement of the motley clientele. He copied down French songs, and he especially liked the scatological ones. The Dublin poet Austin Clarke said, years later, that Joyce was afflicted "with a particular kind of Irish pornography," but that he was also a dreamer. Dreamer and dredger, gerund purveyor and ultimate wordsmith, he would lope his way home from the bar, dancing capriciously in his cups, reciting Verlaine, and yet be ready for the next day's excruciating work, to embody the jokes, the smut, the ditties, the flotsam and jetsam of all that he had heard, so as to make his book more commodious—more nearly universal. For a lesser writer, such dissipations would have been ruinous, but he wanted to experience everything in order to write it. It was not simply that. He would astound his readers. He would bring them to a pitch of consciousness where they had not gone before. Not for him the leisureliness of Marcel Proust, of whose masterpiece he said, "Analytic still life. Reader knows end of sentence before him."

With Frank Budgen, in Zurich, the revels got heady. The two men stayed out late, still later, Joyce insisting when the bar closed that they be admitted to an upstairs parlor, and in the small hours, when they did make their way home, Joyce, with his straw hat and cane, performing his Isadora Duncan impersonation, a matter of whirling arms, high-kicking legs, and grimaces, which Budgen likened to the ritual antics of a comic religion. They laughed a lot, awakened the neighbors, and arrived home as Bloom and Stephen do in the "Ithaca" section of "Ulysses"—"brothers to the stars at which they gazed." Unfortunately, they returned to an irate Nora Barnacle, shouting out the window and demanding that these revels stop. They didn't. Nothing could dampen Joyce's abundance of spirit and laughter during his richest and most prodigious years. In one of these night flarings, Nora told him that she had torn up his manuscript, and it sobered him enough to ransack the apartment and find it. The book "*ist ein Schwein*," she said.

CAROUSING was only part of the stew. As Joyce hurried from one tuition job to the next, or from one creditor to another, he seemed, as his friend the novelist Italo Svevo noted, "locked in the inner isolation of his being." When Joyce wasn't teaching, he was in a bedroom, suitcase lid on his lap as a desk, bringing to life streets, shops, awnings, sayings, the "druid silence" of the sea, and the sweethearts on St. Stephen's Green, their shadows coupling. Photographs of Nora with her growing children show us a less jaunty, far more solemn woman, with an unreadiness to smile. She was homesick, without wanting to go home. To a maid, she would talk on about Ireland and how quick the clothes dried on the line there, but, as Joyce always said, she detested her race. She was becoming wife and mother and less and less "the blue mountain flower" he had eloped with. From time to time in his letters home, he would refer to her nerves or her nervous breakdown or her fears, as her hair dismayingly began to fall out.

But all was not gloom. He was gathering admirers and little windfalls of money, as chapters of "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" began appearing in an English literary magazine. Ezra Pound placed Joyce above all living writers and, in 1917, he took upon himself the stalwart task of getting "Portrait" published in England. After reading the manuscript, the writer Edward Garnett reported to Duckworth, the publisher, that the book was "discursive, formless, unrestrained, and [filled with] ugly things, ugly words." When Pound read this, he suggested that Garnett be sent to the Serbian front, to take him out of harm's way. Garnett's remarks, Pound said, were typical of the venom and the envy that befoul literature, and as for asking James Joyce for alterations—which the publishers had suggested—it would be tantamount to "fitting the Venus de Milo into a pisspot."

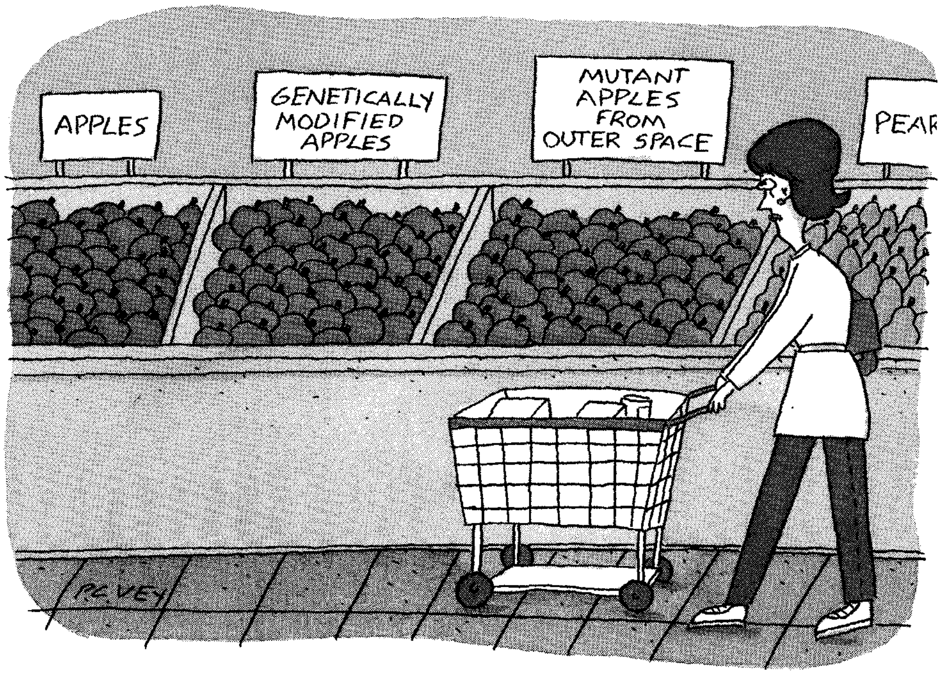
In Britain, Pound and Yeats secured for Joyce a grant of seventy-five pounds from the Royal Literary Fund. At the same time, Harriet Shaw Weaver, an English benefactress who had serialized "Portrait" in her magazine, *The Egoist*, was so touched by Joyce's "piercing spirit" that she resolved to give him a secret allowance of fifty pounds from her capital for four months, and periodic gifts throughout his life. The next bounty was from a more worldly source—Edith Rockefeller McCormick, a devotee of Jung and a patron of the arts in Zurich, who was aware of Joyce's burgeoning notoriety. She decided to bestow on Joyce a fellowship of twelve thousand francs a year (the equivalent, today, of a little more than seven thousand dollars) with a thousand to be paid each month. In order to collect his first monthly installment from the bank, Joyce had to borrow a black suit, and that night in the café it was double litres of white wine.

Except for Miss Weaver's stipend, the gifts came with a price. Mrs. McCormick stopped her allowance one day and refused to meet with Joyce after she received one of his craven letters. As always, he believed that a friend—in this case, a student named Ottocaro Weiss—had betrayed him. Weiss, Joyce maintained, had probably told the good lady of his aversion to Jung, and Jung in turn had probably advised her to stop doling out the money in order to temper Joyce's profligacy. It did not occur to him that Mrs. McCormick was as capricious as many another rich heiress.

There were times during the writing of the book when Joyce admitted to being "on the rocks." Fragments that he had written were scattered in this place and that, and one letter to Svevo shows Joyce's confounding mixture of chaos and particularity. He wrote from Paris that in his brother-in-law's apartment in Trieste there was an oilcloth briefcase fastened with a rubber band which had the color of a nun's belly, approximately ninety-five by seventy centimetres, which he was in urgent need of to finish the "bitch-of-a-mother" book. "Ulysses" was written in three cities—first in Zurich, then in Trieste, to which Joyce returned after the war, and finally in Paris, where he finished the book.

"ULYSSES" is a quintessence of consecration and desecration, at once serious and comical, hermetic and skittish, full of consequence and inconsequence, sounds and silences, lappings and anapests, horse hooves and oxen thuds, and a motley crew of Dubliners on June 16, 1904—in acknowledgment of the date on which Joyce began his courtship of Nora. It was "an uninterrupted unrolling" of thought and feeling—a method that Joyce had first come across in Edouard Dujardin's novel "We'll to the Woods No More." Joyce said that he was giving Dujardin "cake for bread."

For all the vividness of Bloom and Molly, language is the book's hero and heroine—language in constant fluxion, and with a dazzling virtuosity. All the standard notions about story, character, plot, and human polarizings are capsized. To each chapter Joyce gave a title, a scene, an hour, an organ, an art, a color, a symbol, and a technique, so that we are successively in tower, school, strand, house, bath, graveyard, newspaper office, tavern, library, street, concert room, second tavern, a lying-in hospital, a brothel, a house, and a big bed. The medley includes kidneys, genitals, heart, brain, ear, eye, womb, nerves, fat, and



"I was a dog in a previous life, but I came back as a god."

• •

skeleton. The symbols vary from horse to tide, from nymph to Eucharist, from siren to virgin, from Fenian to whore, and on to Earth Mother. The technique ranges from narcissistic to gigantic, from tumescent to hallucinatory, and the styles are so variable that the book's eighteen episodes could really be described as eighteen novels between the covers.

It is hard to imagine the astonishment felt by those who read it for the first time. Margaret Anderson, who serialized "Ulysses" in her New York literary magazine, *The Little Review*, admitted to having cried upon reading the first lines of the "Proteus" section, in which Stephen Dedalus, walking on Sandymount Beach, declares, "Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide." From 1918 to 1920, Anderson published fourteen chapters of the work-in-progress in twenty-three issues. Trouble arose when copies containing what Joyce called a "marmalady" section of the book were confiscated by order of the United States Post Office and burned. For Joyce, the incident was a repetition of the vandalism of "Dubliners," whose publication had been delayed for eight years by pusillanimous publishers. He told Miss Weaver that being "burned" twice on earth would insure him a quick passage through Purgatory.

In September, 1920, John Sumner, the secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, lodged a formal complaint, and Margaret Anderson and her co-editor, Jane Heap, were summoned to the Jefferson Market Courthouse, in Greenwich Village, before three judges and some fascinated New Yorkers. The lawyer John Quinn, who had befriended Joyce, took up the defense of *The Little Review*. Joyce had always guessed that "Ulysses" would bring trouble. In the course of writing the book, he described it to Frank Budgen as a "namby pamby jammy marmalady drawersy (alto là!) style with effects of incense, mariolatry, masturbation, stewed cockles, painter's palette, chitchat, circumlocutions, etc., etc."

Under the court's scrutiny was "Nausicaa," the thirteenth chapter of the novel and one of its most seductive ones. It centers on Gerty and her two girlfriends, Edy and Cissy, who have gone to the sea, to relax and discuss matters feminine. The words of the litany from the nearby Star of the Sea Church—"Tower of ivory, tower of gold," those paeans to the Virgin Mary—intrude on Gerty's erotic stirrings as her woman-flower raises the spectre of a "man-flower" in a gentleman not too far away. It is Leopold Bloom, eying her lasciviously, and very soon she realizes that she has "raised the devil in him." Gerty, this veritable model of young Catholic girlhood, soon yields to the glances of the mysterious stranger. Under the brim of her chocolate straw hat, she sees a face worn but passionate, and, as the incense drifts out from the open window of the church, the pronouncements of the rosary become a little less mystical with each devouring glance.

How physically close Bloom and Gerty actually become we never learn. She swings her legs in and out and feels the warmth of her flesh against her stays as she gazes at fireworks from a nearby bazaar. While Roman candles burst in the sky, she leans far back to give the gentleman a view of her nainsook knickers. Trembling in every limb, Gerty would cry chokingly to welcome him into her snowy-white arms, but she daren't. For him, it is not quite so ethereal. "Up like a rocket, down like a stick," Bloom laments.

When the moment came for the offending passages to be read aloud at the trial, one of the judges asked Miss Anderson to be removed from the courtroom as an act of propriety. The two other judges found the material so incomprehensible that they asked for a week's pause to collect their faculties and read the entire episode. When the proceedings resumed, Quinn contended that Gerty's exhibition of her drawers was not nearly so flagrant as that of the display-window mannequins on Fifth Avenue. The prosecuting attorney became so apoplectic that Quinn cited his reaction as clear evidence that "Ulysses" did not fill people with sexual urges, it made them explode with anger. The judges laughed at this ruse, but the editors of *The Little Review* were nevertheless found guilty of publishing obscenity, fined fifty dollars each, and forbidden to print any more installments of "Ulysses." Joyce countered by saying, "Obscenity occurs in the pages of life, too." But New York publishers who had expressed interest in the novel were now fearful of prosecution, and he said despairingly, "My book will never come out."

YET for his art he always found what he wanted. Waiting in the wings was Sylvia Beach, a bright, eager young woman who had come from Baltimore and made a niche for herself in bohemian Paris with her bookshop, Shakespeare and Company. Her shop was salon, post office, lending library, and impromptu bank for a clutch of American writers, but it was Joyce whom she most coveted for her literary galaxy.

The story has been told again and again: their fairy-tale encounter on July 11, 1920, as she came upon him at a party in his tennis shoes and an old jacket, standing aloof. She approached him and said, "Is this the great James Joyce?" To which he replied, "James Joyce." In keeping with his ever superstitious nature, he was pleased to find her shop linked to Shakespeare's name, and he took it to be a good omen. Not long after, she asked if he would pay her the honor of allowing her to publish "Ulysses." Joyce was incredulous. For all his burgeoning notoriety, he was living in a flat with no electricity, no bathtub, and a few cracked plates, and here was a woman who was proposing to print—through an intellectual printer in Dijon named Maurice Darantière—a thousand copies, a hundred on Holland paper, a hundred and fifty on de-luxe paper, and the remaining seven hundred and fifty on linen. She would give the author sixty-six per cent of the net profits. Neither Miss Beach nor M. Darantière could have guessed the complications that lay ahead, because neither of them knew James Joyce. In his possession was only a carbon copy of "Ulysses," which did not carry the changes he had made in the versions that had been published in serial form. Moreover, these corrections, which were written in his cramped, weblike handwriting, were almost illegible.

Typists were somehow procured—and lost—in this fever of work and revision. If Joyce, as he told Miss Weaver, was in a state of "energetic prostration," so were his helpmates. Some of them were so shocked by the material that they dismissed themselves. Wherever Joyce went, there was chaos. He was still writing to friends to collect "bits" for his Dublin knaves and loiterers, and he was still finishing the last chapter, which he called his "most secret conception."

His demands concerning paper, binding, and typeface were inflexible. He wanted the cobalt blue of the Greek flag on his cover, but locating the correct dye to reproduce that exact blue meant that Darantière had first to journey to Germany, and then submit samples to Joyce, and Joyce didn't feel that the white lettering on blue had the magic impact of white islands on a blue archipelago of water.

Joyce insisted that Darantière send him five sets of page proofs. He constantly made changes on them, and the corrected pages were so scarred with stars and lineations that the beleaguered printer threatened to withdraw. Through it all, Sylvia Beach remained sanguine. The Greek flag fluttered outside her shop, alerting passersby to the great pending event. It was, of course, her halcyon time: a famous, virtually unread book was being published by her and was about to be exhibited in her shop. Meanwhile, Miss Beach was gathering subscribers—people who would place orders for the book. They included Hemingway, Churchill, André Gide, an Anglican bishop, and a few French intellectuals, but not George Bernard Shaw. He declined, adding that the book was a repulsive, if accurate, description of Ireland, and that he would like to force every Irish male between the ages of fifteen and thirty to read it, but that its list price of a hundred and fifty francs (one hundred and forty dollars) was exorbitant. He then indulged in a bit of chiding of Miss Beach, saying that she, no doubt as a young, beglamoured barbarian, assumed the book to be art, but that it was in fact no more than a slice of Dublin life.

In keeping with his superstitions, Joyce wanted "Ulysses" published on his fortieth birthday—February 2, 1922. Darantière managed to grant his wish, entrusting two copies of the book to the conductor of the Dijon-Paris express. Miss Beach met the train at seven in the morning and went directly to Joyce's apartment to deliver her progeny. Joyce signed one copy to Nora, and she at-

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tempted, in her roguish way, to sell it to Arthur Power, a Dubliner who was visiting. The second copy was displayed in the window of Shakespeare and Company, and people came to look at it as they might at some religious phenomenon.

Joyce went to Miss Beach's shop to learn about new subscribers, to wrap up the books for the post, and to provide wild and unrealistic plans for advertising it. As ever, he was alive to omens and slurs. If he saw a rat on the way, he fainted. The shop, Miss Beach later said, was completely at the service of James Joyce and his "Ulysses." Arthur Power said that Sylvia Beach would have crucified herself for Joyce, as long as it was done in public. Once again, Harriet Weaver stepped in to help, arranging for copies to be sent to a host of reviewers, influential people, and libraries, including the Bodleian Library, in Oxford.

To the British critic John Middleton Murry, who praised the novel as the outpourings of a half-demented man of genius, Joyce wrote a cordial letter. He also wrote one to Arnold Bennett, who thought the "Penelope" episode a masterpiece. Joyce suggested to Miss Weaver that she give a nudge to T. S. Eliot to review it in the *Times Literary Supplement*—all the graceless musterings that a writer resorts to once the labor has been finished.

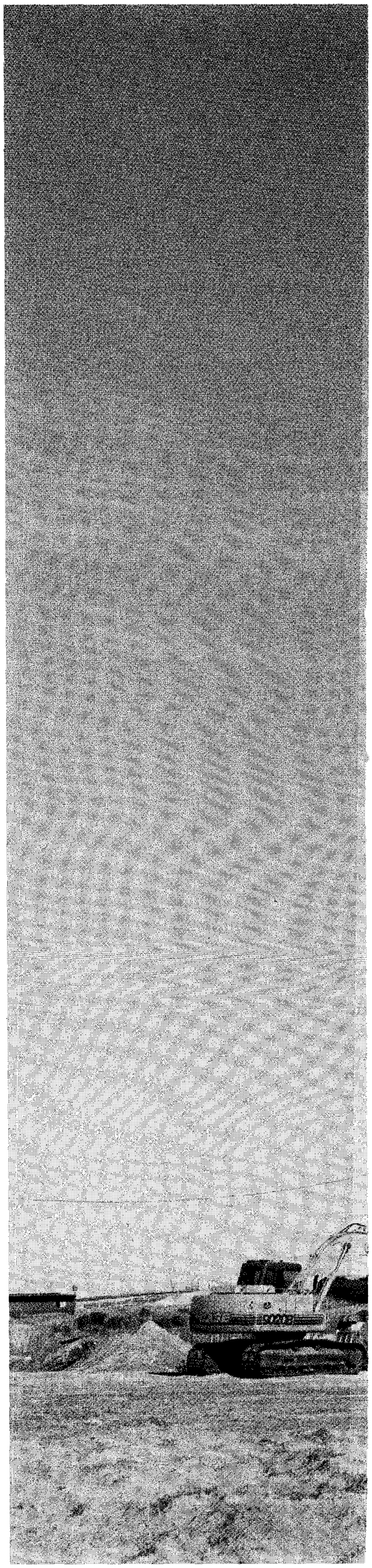
Joyce may, in passing, have called "Ulysses" a "tiresome book," and even said that the money spent on a pound of chops would be just as wisely used, but he raged at the slightest criticism. Rebecca West wrote of Joyce's "camouflaged sentimentality," and Virginia Woolf called the book "underbred"—the effort of "a queasy undergraduate scratching his pimples." One writer who did recognize Joyce's genius was Yeats, who wrote to assure Joyce of his many admirers in Dublin.

What hurt Joyce most was the response of his family. Aunt Josephine, on whom he had so often called for data about this or that, expressed the sort of distaste that the Samsa family feels in Kafka's "Metamorphosis" upon finding that their son Gregor has been turned into a loathsome insect. When Josephine's daughter, Kathleen, told Joyce that her mother had thought the book not fit to read, he replied that if "Ulysses" was not fit to read, life was not worth living. His father looked at passages through his

SHOWCASE

BEACH FRONT

LYNN DAVIS is drawn to fragile monuments, endangered sites, elusive natural wonders. Her distinguished and distinctive photographs are reminiscent of nineteenth-century expeditionary landscape photography and yet they are clearly modernist in intent. She seems to choose her subjects because of their history, but once she starts taking pictures it's all about form and shape. For the last decade or so, Davis has found her subjects far from home, among the ruins and architectural fragments of ancient civilizations. More recently, however, she has been nosing around America, which has its own strangely familiar fragile monuments and endangered sites. The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, for instance, one of the most famous landmarks on the East Coast of the United States, has been in peril for most of this century. Since about 1870, it's been sitting on the ocean side of the Outer Banks of North Carolina, a thin chain of sandy barrier islands that are steadily "migrating" inland. The lighthouse was built fifteen hundred feet from the ocean, but by 1935 there was only a hundred feet of beach in front of it. Various government bodies have tried to control the erosion with sand-dune barriers, reinforced-concrete groins, steel pilings, and stacks of nylon bags filled with sand. Polypropylene tubes were strung together underwater in an attempt to catch suspended sand particles and make a new sandbar. Finally, everybody just gave up and decided to move the lighthouse. Sometime around the middle of June, the International Chimney Corporation—a company that specializes in unusual jobs, like relocating old theatres and memorial arches—will start inching the five-thousand-ton Cape Hatteras Lighthouse toward a new site that is supposed to remain dry for another hundred years. "But things never look or feel the same when the sites change," Davis says. "Abu Simbel was never the same after the Egyptians moved it." —SHARON DELANO



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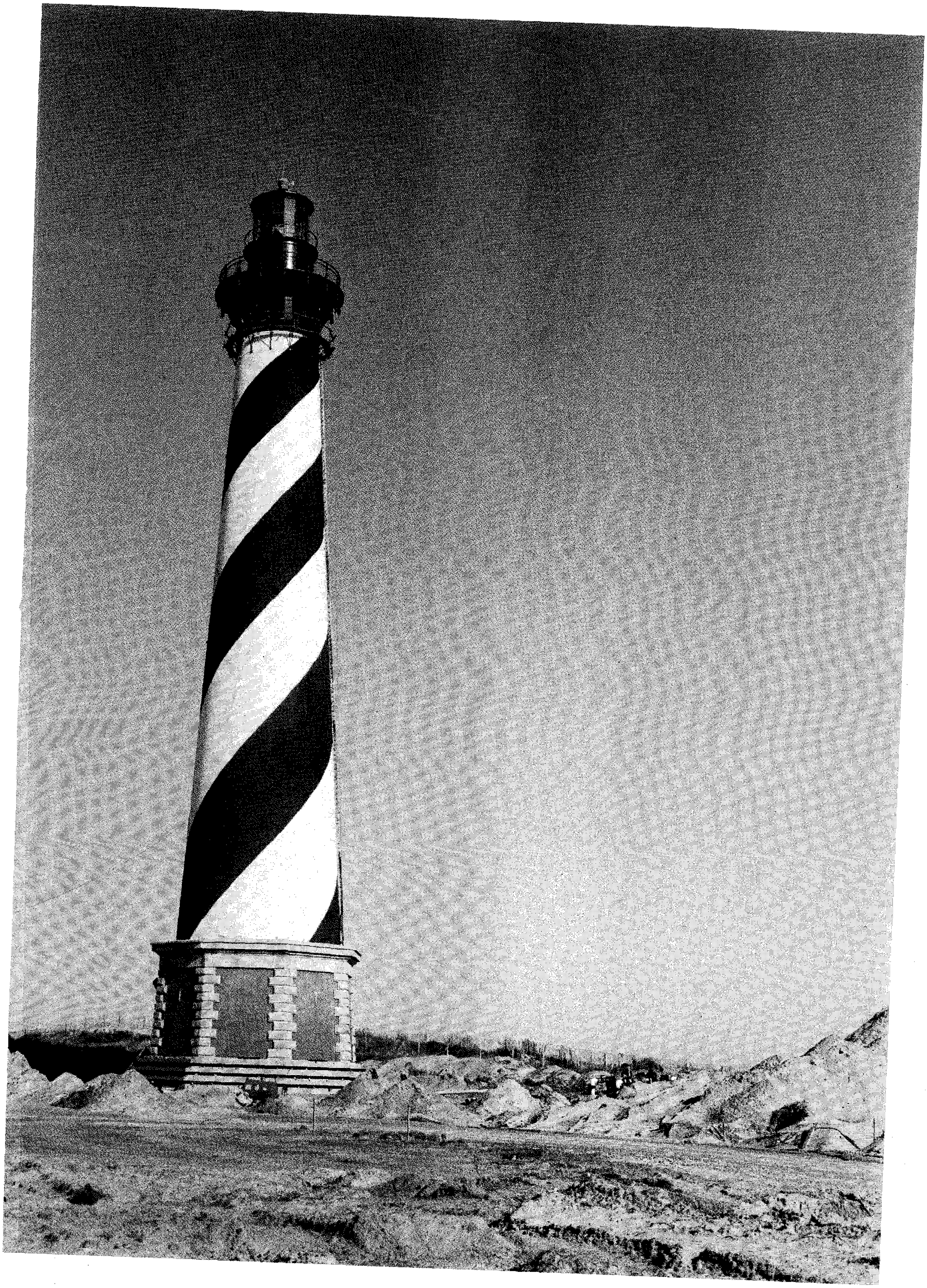

monocle and said that his son was "a nice sort of blackguard." Stanislaus's praise was tepid—hardly surprising from a brother who believed in his symbiotic role in Joyce's genius. The book, he said, "lacked serenity and warmth." The unkindest cut came from Nora. She read only twenty-seven pages, which, as Joyce pointedly said, included the title page.

LEGENDS began to spring up about Joyce as his name circulated even among those who had not read a word of "Ulysses." He was a misanthrope, a cocaine addict, a spy for Austria during the war; the text was merely a code for British intelligence. He swam in the Seine every day, he surrounded himself with mirrors, he wore black gloves in bed, and so on. Nothing was said about the twenty thousand hours of labor that had gone into "Ulysses," his arthritis, the suffusions in his eyes and in his brain, his having to use charcoal sticks and different-colored inks to see what he had written. He tested his failing sight by trying to count the number of lights on the Place de la Concorde when he went out in the evening.

Fame changed him. What he would say in his books he would conceal in his life. When a drinking companion said, "Here's to sin," Joyce countered, "I won't drink to that." He and Nora—no longer rabid lovers—were now, as he put it, "*beati innocenti*." Stanislaus, on a visit to Paris, found him "too pampered," said he drank too much and played with words too much. Nora saw to it that his dress improved—a velvet smoking jacket with a silk cravat and, instead of an ashplant, a snakeskin-covered walking stick.

Joyce may have become grander and more remote, but he was not a recluse. Arthur Power recalled that he functioned best in a noisy place—he needed people around him. At social gatherings, buoyed with drink, he would remember the advice of a fellow-author, James Stephens: "Rejoice and be exceedingly bad." He would sing his favorite song, "The Yellow and the Brown Ale." He had learned a prettified version of it in the "Irish Homestead" as a youth but had searched for the more bawdy version, which dealt with woman's waywardness and man's cuckoldry. He sang beautifully, his voice charged with feeling, pausing on each note or so, and to his listeners it was "pure Irish, filled with tenderness, melancholy, and bitterness." On these occasions, his stiffness and his shyness left him, but, as Archibald MacLeish once said, there was "something vivid and maybe dangerous underneath."

Joseph Conrad, in a letter to a sorrowing aunt, wrote "how solitude loses its terrors once one fully knows it," but for Joyce, solitude would have meant the madhouse. His fear of dogs and thunder are no secret; his fear of madness he both admitted and repudiated; but his fear of aloneness he kept to himself. His family—Nora and their two children—was a bulwark against it, and so was drink. The exile that had been first from his own country extended to an exile from all the rest of the world, and to endure it he had to have bustle around him. The visitors always gauged their behavior by his mood, his smile, or his non-smile. Nora would sit with the guests, not even offering them a drink until Joyce appeared, and his increasing blindness added to the sense of formality as he recognized his guests by their voices, then took his customary place, by the window. The first half hour was always somewhat sombre, with conversation so stilted that even Harriet Weaver was addressed formally. This was not simply grandeur; it was a man with a distance between himself and others.

Paradoxically, as writers wrestle with language to capture the human condition, they become callous, and cut off from the very human traits they so glisteningly depict. There can be no outer voice, no interruptions—only the inner drone, rhythmic, insistent, and struggling to make a living moment of both beauty and austerity. For Joyce, people were becoming more and more remote, and would eventually be spectres.

In 1922, Sylvia Beach wrote to tell him that by allowing a second edition to be published from the same plates she felt that she was in danger of being brought up before a French court for having palmed off a bogus first edition. Angry booksellers, angry publishers, and angry collectors were outraged that their first edition might not be unique. Adrienne Monnier, Miss Beach's lover, later wrote to tell Joyce what she had for a long time been thinking—that Miss Beach, his "maid of all work," was being exploited. She had been put upon, made to hustle. Shakespeare and Company had existed only for the benefit of James Joyce. Those who thought he was indifferent to fame and fortune were sadly mistaken, as she could assure them. True to Joyce's dissembling nature, he did not enter the fray. He said that it was always best not to act for oneself but to cultivate ostensible aloofness and to pull strings.

"I am always friends with a person for a purpose," he had said, and Miss Beach's purpose was waning. He would replace her with another acolyte.

TRUE to a long line of dauntless Englishwomen who have risked their lives and their respectability for a "cause," Harriet Weaver found her cause in the person of James Augustine Aloysius Joyce. That she loved him was undoubted, and that the fact of it was never even broached is remarkable. Whenever she received a small pension from this or that deceased relative, she rushed to put it at his disposal. Whenever he voiced concern over worsening impecunity, she would cross the Channel to reassure him of her support. She saw him down bottle after bottle of wine, tip handsomely, and travel by taxi when she travelled by bus. But none of that did anything to disillusion her.

Various estimates have been made of how much Miss Weaver gave him, over the course of twenty-four years: one Joyce specialist, Robert Adams Day, has calculated that in the equivalent of today's currency it was close to a million dollars. She asked for nothing in return. Her original intention was to give him the wherewithal to write, but soon her role extended to helping him with his living expenses, his wife's living expenses, his children's needs, their illnesses, his numerous eye operations, the hotels in Paris where he lived, and the more opulent hotels where he vacationed. As Joyce became more and more dependent on his benefactress, his need of money became more and more rapacious. His treasury, he wrote her, was being "sucked up by some giant vacuum," which he omitted to call himself.

Miss Weaver would get something in return—the gift of seeing the wonder of Joyce's imagination in full flight. As he began to write his next masterpiece, he sent her glossary after glossary of explanation, along with little nudges for her to delight in his word puzzles.

"Wolken," he explained, was a woollen cap of clouds; "dinn" was a mixture of "din" and the Arabic "djinn"; this from a mind whereupon the word "battlefield" would become "bluddle filth."

One morning in March of 1923, despite upheavals, failing eyesight, and deteriorating health, Joyce took up some foolscap and commenced on his "Work in Progress." The book's title—"Finnegans Wake"—he jealously guarded, confiding it only to Nora, in case he died. " 'Ulysses'—who wrote it, I've forgotten," he said. ♦

BOOKS

HEARTSTRINGS

Musicians in love.

BY DAVID DENBY

Vikram Seth

IN Vikram Seth's novel "An Equal Music" (Broadway; $25), the members of the Maggiore Quartet, in London, begin each rehearsal by slowly playing a three-octave scale in unison. A quarrelsome, gossipy lot, they know one another's secrets all too well, but when they play the scale or, in concert, the music of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, or Schubert, their messy personal lives fall away. "I mute my will, I free my self," says Michael Holme, the second violinist, who narrates the story. Many readers may wish that he had freed himself more often. "An Equal Music" is an object lesson in the dangers of clinging too close to the tremors of pure sensibility. At the beginning of the novel, Michael is in a state of half-miserable equilibrium—"a bearable aloneness," he calls it. He plays and teaches; he carries on a desultory love affair with Virginie, a young Frenchwoman who is one of his students. Virginie is talented, but she's not serious: she's not a real musician—not like Julia, a remarkable Anglo-Austrian pianist whom Michael loved when they were both students in Vienna, a decade earlier, and then left in the midst of a wrenching struggle with an overbearing teacher. He has mourned the affair ever since. When Julia appears in London, they start up again, and Michael falls into a ravaged, and ravaging, adoration which threatens to burst everything apart. Julia is now married (to an amiable American banker) and has a little boy. And she is slowly but inexorably going deaf.

Seth has abandoned the broad, neo-Victorian comic social canvas of his last novel, the internationally best-selling "A Suitable Boy," which was set in newly independent India. He has attempted instead to write a novel that has the isolated and collective strands of anguished beauty of the music played by the Maggiore Quartet. Alas, he flinches from nothing in reporting Julia's deafness—what she hears and doesn't hear, the way she learns more and more through sheer intuition, the toll that her deafness takes on the love affair and on Michael's implacable romantic possessiveness. Reading this brave but hopeless stuff, one quickly learns why fiction's sterner and shrewder talents avoid obvious traps like deafness in great musicians. Pathos and suffering are virtually built into the subject: Seth cannot stop himself from indulging in such episodes of kitschy suspense as a performance of Schubert's "Trout Quintet" by Julia and the quartet, which threatens to fall apart. Will she make it or won't she? And will she play the Bach transcription that means so much to Michael? Much of the time, "An Equal Music" has the too sensitive tremulousness of a quality English movie from about 1945. It is "Brief Encounter" with disabilities and better music (Bach rather than Rachmaninoff). Michael quivers and glowers, collapses backstage, and throws jealous fits. He is meant to be

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BRIEFLY NOTED

BREATH AND SHADOWS, by Ella Leffland (Morrow; $24). In this intricate novel, the stories of three generations of a prominent Danish family parallel and echo one another: an eighteenth-century bishop and his mercenary sister quarrel over their brother, a cantankerous dwarf; in the eighteen-nineties, a languid young housewife slowly goes mad as her horrified husband looks on; and two middle-aged American siblings find themselves opposed, in different ways, to the electronic age. Leffland, who moves with ease from Napoleon's battle at Leipzig to contemporary Malibu, plots her book as densely as a fugue.

MEETING LUCIANO, by Anna Esaki-Smith (Algonquin; $18.95). Emily Shimoda, fresh out of college, returns to Westchester to discover that her Japanese-born mother, now divorced, has hired a Greek-American contractor to fix up the house for a visit by Luciano Pavarotti. How can she protect her mother from both the contractor's wiles and the delusions generated by the tenor's friendly backstage comment? Funny and absurd, this enchanting novel takes multiculturalism for granted and domesticates eccentricity.

TEETH OF THE DOG, by Jill Ciment (Crown; $22). On the fictional Melanesian island of Vanduu, the coin of the realm has been flipped: capitalism has yielded to fundamentalism. Three displaced Americans are living on the island: a renowned anthropologist, who is dying of prostate cancer; his young wife; and a sweetly immoral drug dealer. They are all seeking some form of relief, but when the anthropologist is stoned by a kid whose T-shirt reads "Take the Pepsi Challenge," private griefs become international news.

OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN, by Joanna Trollope (Viking; $23.95). Falling in love with a man does not mean falling in love with his children: that is the premise of this story of linked and sundered families. Josie's second marriage includes three stepchildren, whose loyalty to their inadequate mother makes them hate Josie for her very competence; Elizabeth's beloved fiancé comes with a son she adores and a grown daughter determined to oust her. Trollope may not aim high, but she aims for the heart, and she hits it.

THE SEA CAME IN AT MIDNIGHT, by Steve Erickson (Bard; $23). Part Philip K. Dick, part Gabriel García Márquez, Erickson is a fantasist obsessed with American mythologies. In his new novel, a crackpot "apocalyptologist" posits an alternative theory of recent history, marked by irrational and horrific events—assassination, terrorism, genocide, environmental disaster—which began in May of 1968. The cast includes a motherless teen-age girl, a pair of snuff-film makers, a cartographer, and the daughter of a Japanese nuclear scientist, all haunted and seeking redemption. Against a background of chaos, Erickson has fashioned an ingenious Möbius strip of a book.

a sympathetic example of egotism and romantic receptivity—he's astonishingly sensitive to every stir and shade of the natural world—but one feels trapped in his melancholy self-absorption, and trapped, too, by Seth's descriptive prose, which tends to gather in small, still pools of agonized alienation: "White may is what I love, and lilac lilac; yet modish colours will displace them quite. I walk here and there, and you play Bach for me. Is love so light in the scale? But I see plinths and pillars and pediments from the heights of buses." The book reads truest when it's least poetic—when it gives us the inside dope on expensive vintage instruments, the bustle of agents, bookers, and critics, the near impossibility of playing the thorny opening movement of Brahms' first string quartet, and other episodes in the practical working life of musicians. Seth writes extremely well about music. He, like Michael, escapes himself when he attends to the notes. ♦

THE WAYWARD PRESS

BELTWAY BLUESTOCKING

She was Washington's public intellectual, via Greenwich Village.

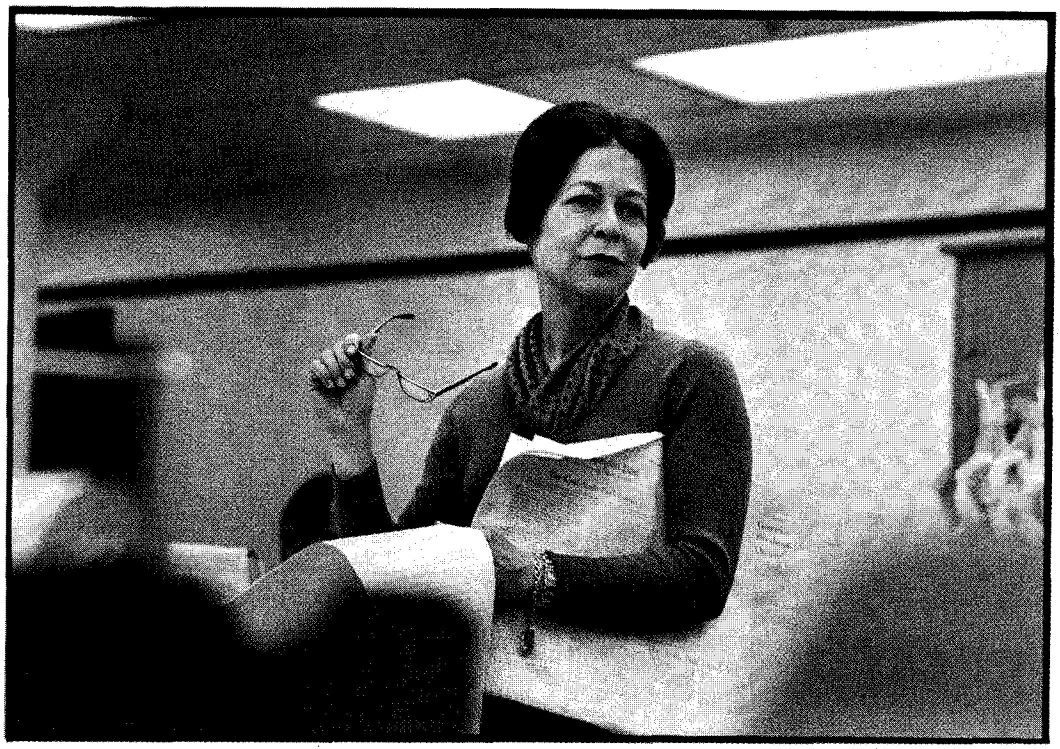
BY HENDRIK HERTZBERG

FOR someone who spent forty years in the higher reaches of the opinion industry—the better part of them running the editorial and op-ed pages of the Washington *Post* and writing a biweekly column in *Newsweek*—Meg Greenfield was a surprisingly difficult person to get a handle on politically. After she died—on May 13th, of cancer, at the age of sixty-eight—I asked a number of her friends and colleagues where they would place her on the spectrum. My puzzlement was genuine, even though I had been reading her since I was a teen-ager and knew her well enough to have shared some enjoyably gabby meals with her in Washington during the nineteen-eighties. It's not that there was anything unclear about her "positions" on "the issues," but what did they add up to? She was an opponent of capital punishment and a supporter of ameliorative social policy, abortion rights, and progressive taxation, and her newspaper had (and has) a not wholly undeserved reputation for liberalism. So was she a liberal? She was also a foreign-policy hawk, a firm anti-Communist, a scorner of victimological excuse-mongering, a critic of identity politics and "political correctness," and a skeptic about grand schemes for social betterment. According to no less an authority than William Kristol, the editor and publisher of the *Weekly Standard*, "Meg Greenfield contributed more than anyone realizes to modern American conservatism." She midwifed the careers of George F. Will, the country's leading conservative columnist, and Charles Krauthammer, its leading neoconservative. Was she a conservative, then? Or a neocon? "If she was," Krauthammer told me, "she sure spent a hell of a lot of time hiding it from me." No one was willing to pin a label on her. Every day, on its editorial page, the *Post* styles itself AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER. Meg Greenfield made that slogan stick.

"Meg was the real article—a public intellectual," George Will wrote, in an affectionate tribute published a few days after her death, adding, "Time was, New York was the magnet that drew such people. Meg's 1961 move from Manhattan to Washington markedly increased the thoughtfulness of the nation's capital." The part about her arrival raising Washington's intellectual level is true (and she did it without her departure's raising New York's). But the magnet that drew her east from Seattle, where she grew up, in comfortable middle-class circumstances, was, precisely, New York. She went to Washington only after she was ordered to.

Greenfield graduated summa cum laude from Smith College in 1952, and went to England on a Fulbright scholarship, hoping to study with the critic F. R. Leavis, at Cambridge. "I went there *for* Leavis, but they didn't let women be tutored by him," she later explained to a friend. She had to content herself with hanging out with the American boys in Leavis's orbit, who included Daniel Ellsberg, later an author and then the discloser of the Pentagon Papers; Norman Podhoretz, later editor of the liberal monthly *Commentary* and then of the neoconservative monthly *Commentary;* and Robert Gottlieb, later the renowned president of Alfred A. Knopf and then, for five years, editor of this magazine. (Gottlieb remained a lifelong friend.) After Cambridge, she lived in Rome for a time, trying to write fiction and learning the things American girls learn when they live in Rome. Then, at twenty-five, she moved to New York and started looking for a job.

It might surprise some of Meg Greenfield's Washington friends to hear that she—along with people like Michael Harrington, Murray Kempton, James Baldwin, and Allen Ginsberg—is a prominent character in "New York in the Fifties," Dan Wakefield's vivid memoir of life in the worlds of bohemia, literature, and politics in Greenwich Village. This is not to say that she was anything remotely resembling a beatnik. "She was the very opposite of a Beat," Wakefield told me the other day. "She always dressed beautifully. She had a nice studio apartment in the Village, and she always kept it sparkling. She was serious about work. But she enjoyed that scene, and she was part of it." She was a kind of bohemian by association. She ran with a set of young writers and would-be writers who knew what instrument Thelonious Monk played and had opinions on Sartre v. Camus. They explored love and sex—cautiously by the standards of a later generation, perhaps, but audaciously by the standards of that one—and their own psyches. ("Everyone went to a shrink," Greenfield told Wakefield. "None of us had money but we all went to shrinks.") Few were radicals, but all were dissenters of one kind or another, and all were thoroughly steeped in a milieu where tolerant attitudes about sexual behavior and race, and avant-garde notions about art and psychology, were taken for granted. "We were part of a community of people who objected to the Republican philosophy of government," Greenfield once said. "Ours was the politics of objection. We all had a shared sense of being fugitives from the provinces and from the values of our parents and former high-school friends."



Meg Greenfield at the Washington Post during the Watergate era. Photograph by Harry Benson.

Greenfield soon landed a job doing research for Volunteers for Stevenson, the ad-hoc group that conducted Adlai Stevenson's 1956 Presidential campaign in New York, and that led to a research job at a magazine called *The Reporter*. She obsessively collected clips on the then Vice-President of the United States, and, just before the 1960 election, the magazine published her first article, a long, playful, mocking analysis entitled "The Prose of Richard M. Nixon." The piece was a minor sensation. After that her ascent was steep.

The Reporter is almost entirely forgotten today, but in the fifties and early sixties it was read by a big slice of the American intellectual élite. It was a text-rich liberal biweekly published on slick paper, with a handsomely restrained layout and a cover that was invariably occupied by a quiet painting and a discreet line of type at the top. *The Reporter* was a cross between *The New Republic* and *The New Yorker*, both of which it shared writers with, and its circulation, around a quarter of a million, hovered roughly midway between those of its models. Its editor and publisher, Max Ascoli, was a refugee from Fascist Italy and a cultivator of talent—besides Greenfield, his discoveries included Elizabeth Drew, Marya Mannes, Claire Sterling, and Ward Just. *The Reporter* passed the tests that the fifties set for liberals: it was anti-Communist, anti-McCarthyite, and anti-segregation. So Greenfield acquired no illusions to feel bitter about, no moral errors to compensate for—one reason, perhaps, that she never toppled over the line into full-blown neoconservatism.

Greenfield got her job at the *Post* through the Vietnam War. In 1961, Ascoli sent her to Washington. (Like many New Yorkers in the early stages of D.C. transplantation, she hung on to her Manhattan apartment for years.) She became a star, but her theatre fell on hard times. Ascoli turned out to be a shrill and unbending supporter of the war. His signed editorials drove away readers, and in 1968 *The Reporter* folded. Meanwhile, the *Post's* publisher, Katharine Graham—influenced by, among others, her son Donald, who was a soldier in Vietnam and was writing thoughtful letters home—had been gradually steering the paper away from its previously uncritical support. Her new editorial-page editor, Philip Geyelin, snapped Greenfield up as soon as she became available. Mrs. Graham and the new editorial writer quickly became friends. What happened next is recounted with charming artlessness by the publisher in her autobiography, "Personal History":

> Meg rapidly made her own place in the organization, and only ten months after she had come to the paper, I sent Phil a note saying I'd been thinking about the necessity for him to have a "No. 2" eventually, and wondered if it might be Meg—"Or do you discriminate? Or would she hate it?" Just a year after she arrived, Phil named her deputy editor of the editorial page. I gave him great credit for appreciating Meg's amazing mind and extraordinary ability both to write and to edit, and her prodigious capacity for work. It was foresighted of Phil to make her his deputy—well ahead of upward mobility for women.

FORESIGHTED, indeed. Greenfield was no ordinary deputy. Long before she succeeded Geyelin, in 1979, she was a full member of the junta that guided the paper through the tumult of the next thirty years: the publication, with the *Times*, of the Pentagon Papers; Watergate and the titanic struggle with Nixon, who was such a favorite subject of hers that he might be considered her muse; the long, bitter pressmen's strike of the mid-seventies; the death of the rival Washington *Star* and the *Post's* consolidation of its position of total dominance in its market.

Like her old boss Max Ascoli, she could spot talent. In some Washington circles, the tale of how she met a smart-aleck young congressional staffer named George Will at a college conference and decided he might have the makings of a columnist is as burnished and oft-told as a tribal creation myth. Less familiar is the story of her recruitment of Mark Alan Stamaty, who had been drawing a comic strip called "MacDoodle Street," about the denizens of his lower Manhattan neighborhood, for the *Village Voice*. One day in 1981, he got a call from Greenfield, whom he had never heard of, saying that she wanted him to make fun of Washington, a city he knew nothing about, on her op-ed page. Stamaty took the train down to D.C. and plunged himself into research. A few months later, Stamaty's "Washingtoon," featuring Congressman Bob Forehead, of the Congressional J.F.K.-Look-Alike Caucus, began a twelve-year run in the *Post*.

Greenfield's friendship with Katharine Graham deepened over the years: two single, brainy women, who toured the world together, interviewing the likes of Anwar Sadat and Mikhail Gorbachev, and, back in Washington, lunching regularly with Nancy Reagan. But, even as Greenfield became a pillar of the Washington establishment, she never lost her tone of wry independence. Michael Kinsley, another person whose career she boosted, told me, "On the one hand, Meg was the powerful editorial-page editor of the Washington *Post*, hung around with important people, and made no bones about it. She never did the 'I'm just a little girl, help me out' number. But, on the other hand, she was nothing like a pompous Washington big shot. She didn't take herself, or anything, too seriously."

Greenfield's personal life was extraordinarily private. She was an attractive woman—trim and delicate, with a round, pretty face, a wide mouth framed by deep laugh lines, and dark hair in rolls at the sides of her head—and her sense of humor made her more so. Her friends agree that she would have liked to marry and have children, and that it was a source of sadness to her that things didn't work out that way. Once, when she was introduced to an audience as one of those modern women who had elected not to get married and have children, she said, "I don't recall voting in that election." Her life turned out to be her work, and she did it well.

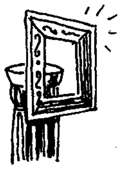
If pressed, Greenfield would describe herself as a "fifties liberal," and that seems right. She came to Washington fully formed, and she never fundamentally changed. "She was always an adult," Bob Gottlieb says. Dan Wakefield, describing her in a crowded hotel ballroom during the 1960 campaign, evokes her this way: "Meg Greenfield of *The Reporter*, looking sharp in a Peck & Peck blouse and circle pin, ready to skewer the rhetoric of some platitudinous politician—I thought of Meg as our political Dorothy Parker." That's how she started, and that's how she ended. ♦

THE ART WORLD

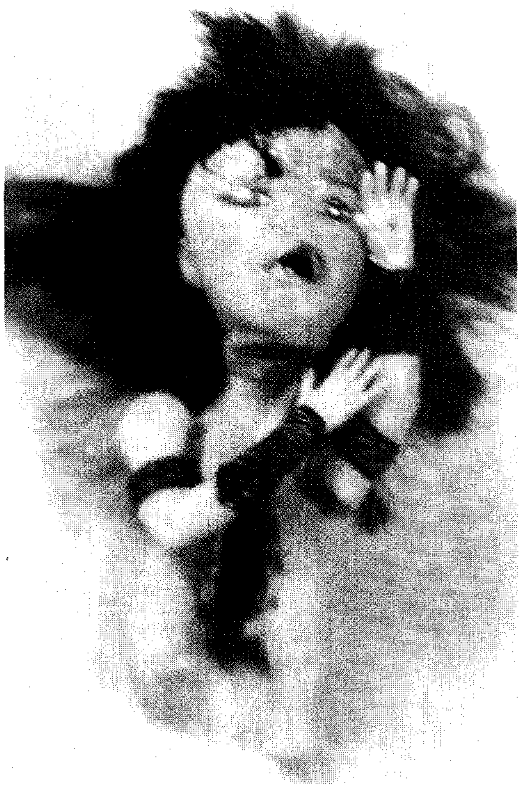
VALLEY OF THE DOLLS

Cindy Sherman's return to form.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL



CINDY SHERMAN'S first show of new photographic work in nearly four years, at Metro Pictures, shocks by the raucousness of its imagery and, no less, by the unusual blandness of its style. On view are fifteen black-and-white pictures of variously ravaged, grotesquely sexualized little plastic figures, arrayed in attitudes and scenes of outlandish depravity. The winsomely raunchy critters incorporate dismembered and often slashed or burned fragments of Barbies and Kens and other mass-produced dolls, including a line of hyperphallic he-men based on characters by the late gay artist Tom of Finland. The low-contrast, shallow-focussed photographs—shot in closeup with a handheld camera and fast film—are milkily gray in tone and are smallish for Sherman exhibition prints, typically measuring about three feet on their long sides. They do not, to put it mildly, ingratiate at first glance.



Sherman's nasty new doll photographs: Initial horror gives way to revelation.

Idle buzz about Sherman's life—a bad art-world habit concerning an artist who is famous for using herself in her work—finds personal reasons for the show's apparent sour mood. Her marriage of fifteen years to the video artist Michel Auder ended in divorce last month. Her 1997 horror flick, "Office Killer," starring Carol Kane as a drab secretary turned serial murderer, was backed and then all but buried by Miramax. It's out on tape, however. I recommend it. With lurid cinematography that is frequently astonishing, as one might expect, the film is no disgrace, but it suffers from a feeble script (not by Sherman) and from evidence that as a director of actors she is well advised in her usual practice of casting only herself. At any rate, her career is recovering from the longest hiatus and the first real stumble in a triumphal march of more than twenty years.

Ever the alert journalist, I asked Sherman last week if her new photographs' tacit fury had anything to do with her marital and cinematic troubles. "Sure," she said lightly. "I'm venting." By which I understood her to mean something like "Oh, please." I have known her and have often written about her since 1982, when a show of daydreaming female characters in "centerfold" format, with its public spectacles of impenetrable privacy, cracked my personal top-ten list of life-changing art epiphanies. So I know very well that she never argues with anyone's interpretations of her work, be they gossipy or tendentious. I know, too, that interpretation is a nuisance when it comes to art as transcendent as Sherman's—which, with contemplation, takes willing viewers very far from their initial reactions. But, if one thing characterizes the world's perennial response to this great artist, it's the rage to explain her.

Almost everybody admires Cindy Sherman, just as almost everybody has been struck at some point, amidships, by the power of her vision. Our compulsive pursuit of her secrets isn't malicious, though it may generate resentment the way unrequited love does. In person, her shy, amiable, plain manner—"She's just herself," one feels compelled to remark—stymies celebrity treatment. Her blinking refusal to endorse any analysis mocks the heavy-metal academic texts that keep claiming her for this or that theory. It's exasperating, in a way. All we want is for Sherman to be a star. A star is a figure of consensus, who makes a family of us. A star may mystify but must not confuse. Sherman sows confusion. She is an anti-star, really, who dissolves every basis for distinguishing one person—or, for that matter, one class or sex or species or metaphysical status (living, dead)—from another. The more her work tells us, the less sure we are about her or about much of anything.

Sherman is the doyenne of an epochal evolution of photography into "photographic art," by which the mechanical medium has usurped painting's traditional function as densely absorbing wall ornament, along with a goodly chunk of the fine-art market. The Museum of Modern Art recently spent upward of a million dollars for a set of "Film Stills"—Sherman's black-and-white pictures of herself in generically actressy guises—which she made on the cheap while she was still in her early twenties. (We're talking the quality level of everyday glossies here, not vintage prints by Berenice Abbott.) At auction, her dozen or so subsequent series of, in essence, one-frame movies—each picture featuring herself except when it is some variety of still-life—perform like NASDAQ high-techs.

"OH no!" I exclaimed aloud to nobody when I first glimpsed Sherman's pale, insouciantly nasty new doll photographs. I didn't know what I wanted in the way of a comeback after her equivalent of Bob Dylan's motorcycle accident, but it wasn't this. Then I reflected. When have I not been whipsawed by the début of a Sherman series? If she is predictable in anything, it is in turning the tables on lazy expectations that emerged in the wake of her previous work. The melodramatic intensity of the breakthrough "centerfolds" gave way to impersonations of almost vengefully ordinary-seeming women and men. In 1982, under pressure of clamorous art-world curiosity about "the real Cindy," she issued four harrowing photographs of herself, without makeup or clothes, clutching a ratty bathrobe in convincing moods of outright depression. Those images convey the despair of a cornered prey animal, and they remain hard and shaming to look at.

Later Shermanic themes include clownish or tragic theatrical tableaux, travesties of glamour and fashion photography, fairy-tale situations and creatures, fantasies of death and decay, still-lifes hinting at bulimic vomit and other psychosomatic calamities, and gorgeously grisly exaggerations of Surrealist dreamscape and horror-movie monstrosity. For a couple of years around 1990, Sherman gave us a break with deliriously charming pastiches of Old Master portraiture, embodying canny appreciations of Raphael, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, and Ingres. The euphoric public reception of those pictures startled her. "I knew they'd be accessible," she said to me at the time. "But I didn't know *how* accessible"—words to make a seasoned Sherman fan afraid. Indeed, her next show shoved in our faces gruesome arrays of medical and sexual prostheses. Who can forget a certain midair, hideous drip of clear fluid? But note well that the drip turned out, upon not terribly close inspection, to be as benignly ersatz as all special effects à la Sherman: a glass bead on a wire.

There is, after all, at least one deducible secret that is fundamental to Sherman's magic: she never, ever, makes a secret of any visual effect. Not only is nothing in her pictures what it seems to be at an overexcited first glance; it is always patently something else. In her Old Master portraits, initially ravishing "lace," "silk," "brocade," and other "sumptuous" materials quickly confess to being so many shoddy, Fourteenth Street schmattes. They couldn't fool anyone. And yet at the outset they gull us all. Such is the might of fully imagined fiction. We seize upon the proffered illusion, be it ever so attenuated. Then comes the echt Sherman moment, when the illusion collapses. We are left foundering in the backwash of our suddenly absurd credulity. Now what?

If we don't recoil, we may come to consciousness of our experience's true object: splendid, strong, formally perfect art. Sherman's authority as an oracle of images rests on her selfless dedication as a master of pictorial aesthetics. After toppling us from sensation into befuddlement, her art catches us in nets of beauty. It never fails. She is a genius. I have reached the ultimate stage of my response to Sherman's doll pictures. My initial revulsion seems incredible to me, but I can't disown it. Delmore Schwartz's great title for one of his short stories occurs to me: "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities." For one thing, the soft grays of the new Shermans—incidentally, her first black-and-white series since the "Film Stills"—precipitate a delicately rhetorical, civilized aura of dreaming. For the main thing, the pictures enter our biographies as aides-mémoire, marking moments when we realized some truth about ourselves.

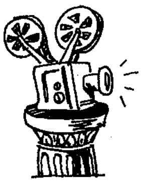
Sherman uses horror and the grotesque efficiently—to reach the nuclear core of our emotions. Down there, nothing is stable. Beauty and ugliness, like desire and disgust, mock our intelligence, our dignity, and even our sanity. They turn into each other without notice. They do not play fair with reason. Sherman proves to me again and again that my unconscious mind does not belong to me, that it is a bin of infinitely suggestible cultural and perhaps genetic patterns of ready-made meaning. Her pictures retain the febrile intoxication of our dreams while bringing us, by means of their exacting form, soberly, perhaps painfully, at last joyously awake. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

BOY MEETS GODDESS

In a new romantic comedy, everyone gets along famously.

BY ANTHONY LANE

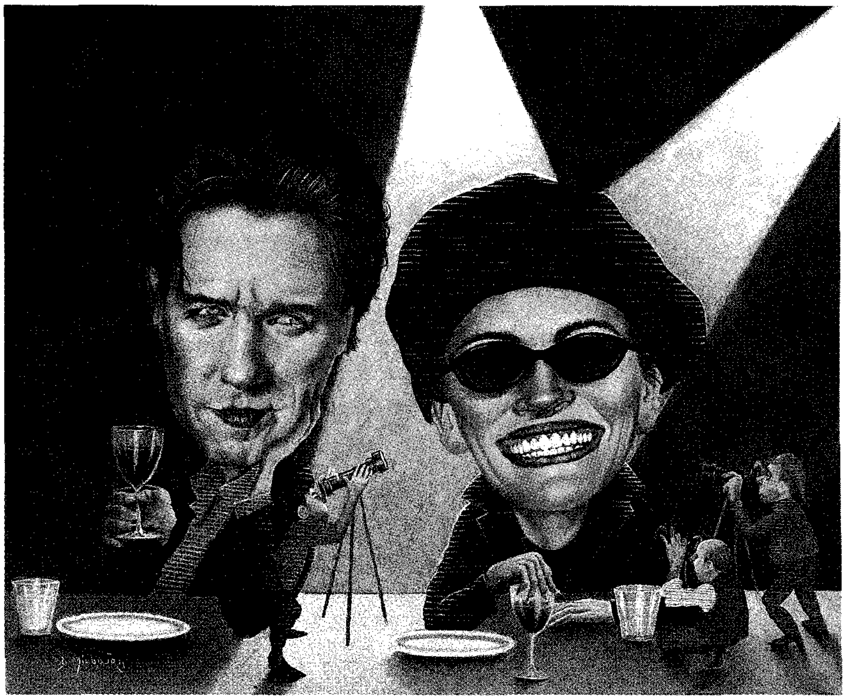


The star of "Notting Hill," in case you're wondering, is Notting Hill, a fashionable and multiracial patch of West London. Here it plays a distilled and disturbingly white-faced version of the real thing. In the same vein, Hugh Grant plays a hapless rendition of himself called William Thacker, who runs a small travel bookshop with a startling lack of profit. One day, Anna Scott (Julia Roberts) turns up to browse. We first see her as an unfocussed blur in the background; she then comes sharply into view and, from there, into the forefront of William's life. His opening move is to tip orange juice over her chest, paw weakly at the stain, and suggest that she change her T-shirt in his apartment across the road. In the first of many rousing implausibilities, Anna accepts his offer, not realizing that if you remove any item of clothing in the vicinity of an Englishman he will, regardless of his current status, become your love slave for eternity.

The joke is that Anna is a global movie star; now that I think of it, she reminded me slightly of Julia Roberts. Anna earns fifteen million dollars a picture but has forgotten how to confront the world without her sunglasses; she is so famous, and fame is now such a stockade, that it will take someone of lunatic determination to break down the gates. And that is the plot of "Notting Hill": Anna and William fall for each other and try to establish whether you can commit to someone who is not demonstrably of the same species. When the princess sleeps with the frog, and the frog refuses to turn into a prince, what next? Can the princess be persuaded to jump into the pond?

In this tale of commoner meets royalty, the director, Roger Michell, and the writer, Richard Curtis, have found a neat hook for their movie—even neater than that of "Roman Holiday," say, in which Audrey Hepburn jumped off her pedestal for Gregory Peck. (Note what half a century can do to an ideal; with Hollywood more rampant and secretive than ever, who would now look to actual royalty for the unattainable?) If anything, Michell has piled too much on his plate. As he showed in his punchy TV drama, "The Buddha of Suburbia," and later in "Persuasion"—the most vibrant of the Jane Austen adaptations—he likes to color his romances with quick, caustic swipes at the society that surrounds and smirks at love, and I sensed in "Notting Hill" a half-thwarted need to lay into the whole business of celebrity, with its hell brew of the inhuman and the sentimental. The film is at its most wondrous, yet also its most irate, during the opening credits, where flashlit glimpses of Julia Roberts are rocked and lauded by the sound of Elvis Costello belting out "She" with what you might call passion aggression. William boldly declares, "It's as if I've taken love heroin," but the film fails to back him up; it's all about people—and, to an extent, aimed at people—who are turned on by a single lick of the love popsicle.

Richard Curtis, for one, is too canny to let obsession spoil the show. As he made clear in "Four Weddings and a Funeral," he is the acknowledged expert at fine-tuning a script to meet and flatter our expectations without bruising our assumptions. Anna's big speech rises to the simple announcement that "the fame thing isn't really real, you know," which I wish were true. She continues, "I'm just a girl standing in front of a boy asking him to love her," which must have been as tough to deliver as that James Stewart line in "The Philadelphia Story" about the "fires banked down" inside Katharine Hepburn. Curtis has been wise enough, and hopeful enough, to ally himself with a particular tradition of romantic comedy—with the heartfelt (if alkaline) conviction that everything is food for comedy except the romance itself. He honestly roots for Anna and William, and exhorts us to do the same.



Hugh Grant and Julia Roberts in "Notting Hill": Are they lovers or just good friends?

From here on, it's a matter of taste. Many people will be wowed by the central pairing of "Notting Hill"; as time went by, however, I thought that William and Anna looked less and less like enraptured lovers and more and more like really good friends. Curtis might take that as a compliment; his constant demand is that, apart from a couple of walk-on stooges, everyone in his movies should get along handsomely.

Much of the film is consumed with conversations—at dinner parties, in restaurants, in a car—between a bunch of William's pals. There is Max (Tim McInnerny), who is married to Bella (Gina McKee); there is Bernie (Hugh Bonneville), a useless stockbroker; and there is Honey (Emma Chambers). In an earlier version of the script, Honey was William's suitor; now she is his sister. Such is the amiable, deeply unthreatening world of "Notting Hill," and no wonder Anna is made welcome.

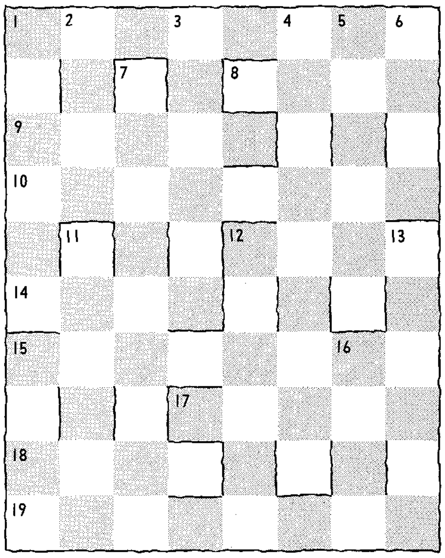
The problem is that she spends a large chunk of the movie perfecting her impression of Bambi caught in the headlights. Everyone around her is terrified by the prospect of a superstar and then slowly softens; Julia Roberts, on the other hand, never really defrosts. When Anna asks William up to her room at the Ritz, her tone is fringed with desperation, as if what awaits them were not a downy bed but a session on a therapist's couch. The driving conceit of the story is that this woman should melt into normality and yield to the levelling of love; but the effulgence of the Roberts smile, and even her posture, have a curious fixity that forbid her to unwind. There's a morning-after scene when William and Anna lie in bed and talk, as one does, of breasts. "I mean, they're just breasts," she says. "You must have seen a thousand of them—what's the fuss about?" Needless to say, the sheet stays tucked securely around her upper half, and she gets out of bed off-camera; the dialogue is a hymn to openness, but you would have to pay Julia Roberts a lot more than fifteen million dollars to stroll naked across the room. (If she were ever going to do it, now would have been the moment.) It was easy to imagine Audrey Hepburn—always game for a good time—gaily spending the rest of her life with Gregory Peck. That made it all the more of a wrench when she had to return to duty at the end. But Anna and William as a married couple? We see him accompanying her to a première, and he wears the expression of a man who would rather be at home with a bowl of cereal.

To be fair, the need for peace and quiet is a major weapon in the Hugh Grant armory. In a recent interview—always a pleasure, since he has a more graceful turn of phrase than any other movie star—he called his acting range "sinisterly narrow," but, if so, it's a brilliant sliver. He gets at minor-league feelings that few performers can be bothered with: the hangdog, the casually stricken, the polite pointing out of clouds behind the silver lining. One sequence in "Notting Hill" finds him at a press junket, posing as a hack from *Horse & Hound* in an effort to see his beloved; he falls at every conceivable fence, and the full-length shot of him wandering haggardly down the corridor afterward is an unimprovable study in petty disaster. This makes him a suspect choice for happy endings, but there's no doubt that Grant suits—and even redeems—the peculiar, stop-go motion of Curtis's plot. Boy and girl hit it off, then lose it, then hit it off again, and so on, with gruesome snatches of soft rock covering the cracks in the narrative. There's a climactic car chase, but it's set in motion by nothing more than William's acquaintances soberly debating the justice of his conduct. Also, it stars only one car. Typical bloody England.

"Notting Hill" is the most cunning work of transatlantic fiction that I have seen in years; there is a dash of diluted Henry James in the way it lets each nationality feel subtly superior to the other. The English will snigger at the neuroses that appear to be draped like jewelry around the neck of the successful American, while viewers here will gaze down pityingly at the stuttering incompetence of the English; an entire scene, indeed, consists of William and his friends vying to be hailed as tragic losers. Michell and Curtis try to cast a spell over the streets of Notting Hill—wait for the overhead shot of a moonlit tryst in a private park—but the magic resolves itself into nostalgia, into an ill-defined hunger for an age when desire (not least the desire to go to the movies) had its own established decorum. Anyone expecting a rerun of "Four Weddings" will be bemused by the gently unfarcical air of "Notting Hill"; it turns on the charm, but the laughs are surprisingly sparse. Most of them are farmed out to Spike (Rhys Ifans), William's foul and gangling flatmate. "All that awaits me at home is a masturbating Welshman," William says sadly. Word has it that American preview audiences were much taken with Spike, even to the exclusion of the Hugh-and-Julia story. So much for romantic comedy. We live in troubling times. ♦

8 x 10 CRYPTIC

NO. 91 BY MIKE SHENK



ACROSS

- 1 Cites crazy forester (6,2)
- 8 Swedish car sounds like a sheep when backing up (4)
- 9 Democrat leading Perot? That's rubbish (5)
- 10 Partly ignores us and eyes TV actress (5,3)
- 12 Reportedly drop match in time (4)
- 14 Critic's topic: star in a remake (4)
- 15 Lacking shoes, a sports official gets into heavy footwear (8)
- 17 A male cat's smallest parts (5)
- 18 What you pay after opening cereal (4)
- 19 Collecting royalty in the middle of downpour (6,2)

DOWN

- 1 Engineer erased map feature (3,3)
- 2 Pale brown section of piecrust (4)
- 3 Head of editorial revised *Sassy* articles (6)
- 4 New Jersey peninsula experienced quakes, trapping actor Garcia (5,4)
- 5 Gift returned at pre-Easter time (6)
- 6 Comply with boyfriend, in pig Latin (4)
- 7 Be neglectful in storage room, missing first shelf (4,5)
- 11 Spy organization has organized certain cases (6)
- 12 Mollify head of state again and again (6)
- 13 Interrupts play with tunics (4,2)
- 15 Vocal "I'm cold"—you might hear it from a Scotsman (4)
- 16 Native of Muscat is missing a science magazine (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 90 appears on page 81. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

THE BACK PAGE BY ROZ CHAST

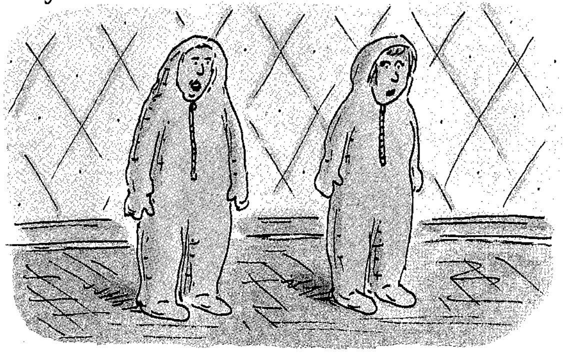
THIS SPRING, TRY...

LIFE'S END®

CLOTHING FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE JUST GIVEN UP

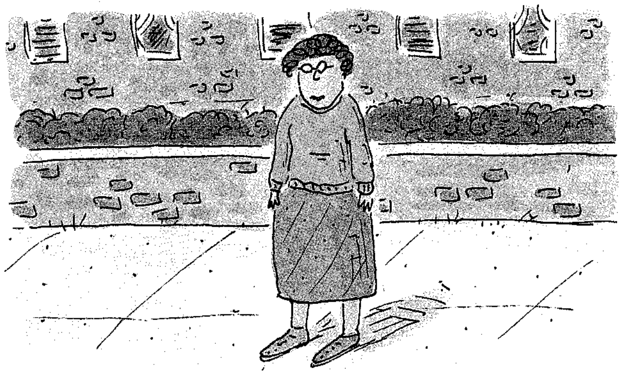
#103 ~ Super-Duper Cozy Zip-locked Sleepwear

Because, let's face it: who wants somebody messing with them just as they're going to sleep?



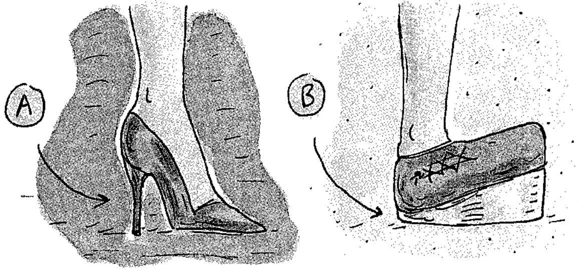
#275 ~ Unattractive-Length Skirt

Scientists in our lab have worked for years to determine exactly the most repellent length for a skirt ~ and *here it is*!



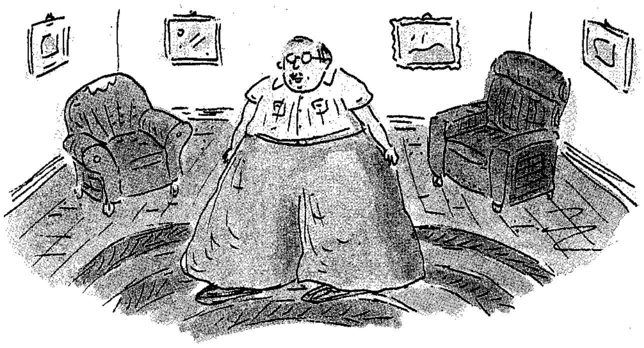
#399 ~ *Way* Negative-Heel Shoes

If a high heel makes a woman look *more* desirable, what do you think its *opposite* does?



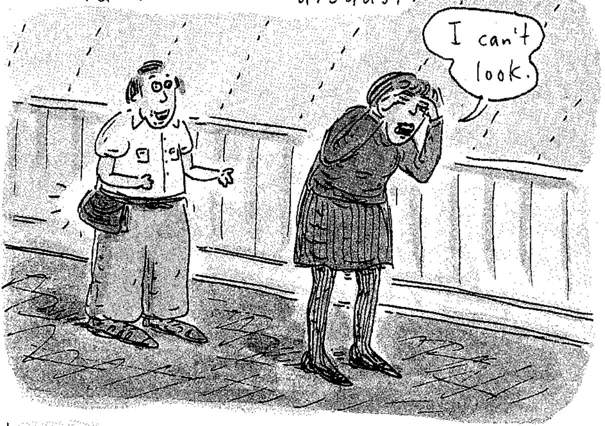
#192 ~ Comatose-Fit Jeans

To hell with "relaxed." Let's get real.



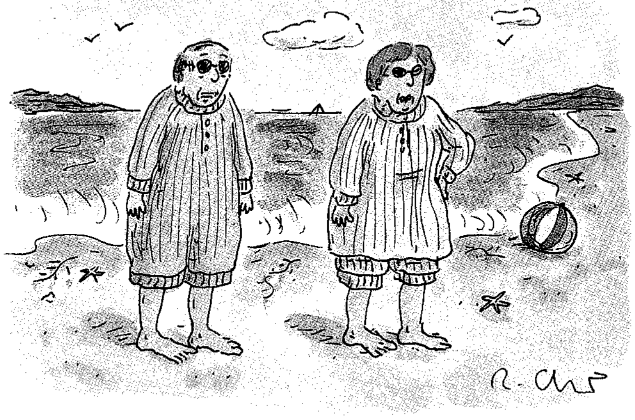
#316 ~ Fanny Pack

Strap on one of these and watch women turn aside in disgust.



#487 ~ Life's End® Swim Garments

Don't you wish *everyone* wore one?



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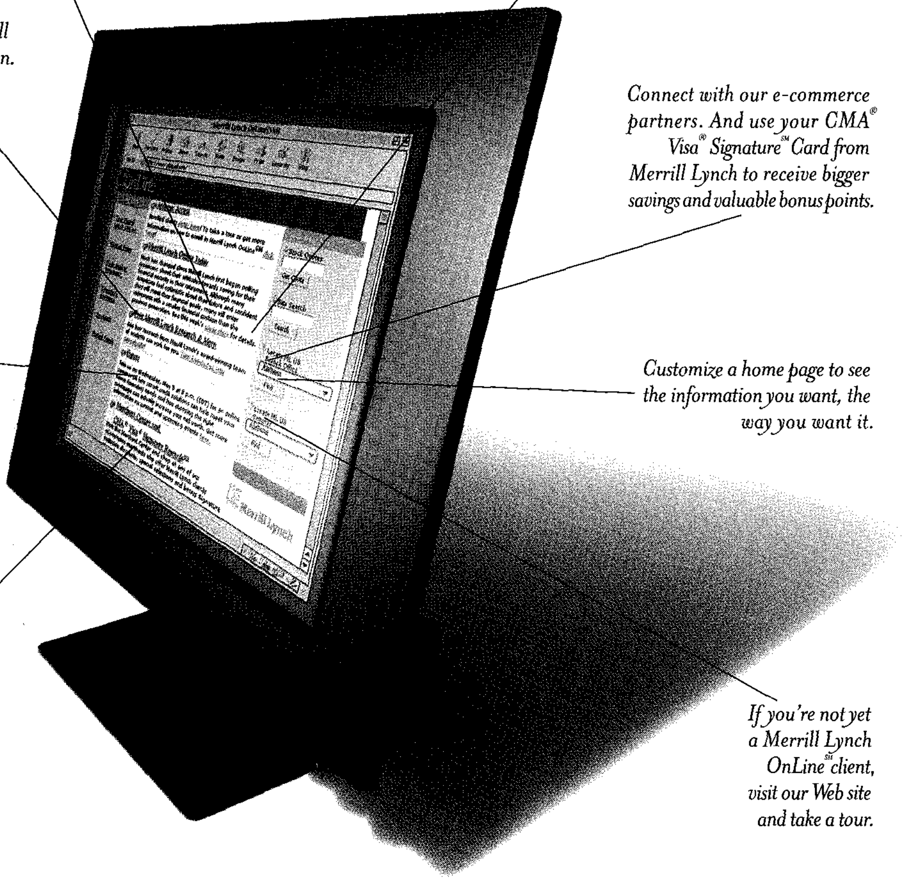

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